TONY BLAIR VS. THE LABOUR PARTY
IRWIN M. STELZER

the weekly Standard

OCTOBER 14, 2002

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Why He Drives Them Crazy

sh, Daschle, Dowd,
d the Baghdad Democrats

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More Reasons to Remove Saddam

For the past two weeks, the online journal *Slate* has been conducting an interesting dialogue among its contributors about the merits of invading Iraq, which THE SCRAPBOOK highly recommends. But there's been one outstanding contribution, the Oct. 3 letter from *New Yorker* writer Jeffrey Goldberg, portions of which we reproduce below for our friends who prefer reading hard copy:

"In 1995, the government of Saddam Hussein admitted to United Nations weapons inspectors that its scientists had weaponized a biological agent called aflatoxin. Charles Duelfer, the former deputy executive chairman of the now-defunct UNSCOM, told me earlier this year that the Iraqi admission was startling because aflatoxin has no possible battlefield use. Aflatoxin, which is made from fungi that occur in moldy grains, does only one thing well: It causes liver cancer. In fact, it induces it particularly well in children. Its effects are far from immediate. The joke among weapons inspectors is that aflatoxin would stop a lieutenant from making colonel, but it would not stop soldiers from advancing across a battlefield.

"I quoted Duelfer, in an article that appeared in the *New Yorker*, saying that 'we kept pressing the Iraqis to discuss the concept of use for aflatoxin.' They never came up with an adequate explanation, he said. They did admit, however, that they had loaded aflatoxin into two warheads capable of being fitted onto Scud missiles.

"Richard Spertzel, who was the chief biological weapons inspector for UNSCOM, told me that aflatoxin is 'a devilish weapon. From a moral standpoint, aflatoxin is the cruelest weapon—it means watching children die slowly of liver cancer.'

"Spertzel went on to say that, to his knowledge, Iraq is the only country ever to weaponize aflatoxin.

"In an advertisement that appeared in the *New York Times* on Tuesday [Oct. 1], a group of worthies called upon the American people to summon the courage to question the war plans of President Bush. The advertisement, which was sponsored by Common Cause, asks, in reference to the Saddam regime, 'Of all the repugnant dictatorships, why this one?' . . .

"There are, of course, many repugnant dictators in the world; a dozen or so in the Middle East alone. But Saddam Hussein is a figure of singular repugnance, and singular danger. To review: There is no dictator in power anywhere in the world who has, so far in his career, invaded two neighboring countries; fired ballistic missiles at the civilians of two other neighboring countries; tried to have assassinated an ex-president of the United States; harbored al-Qaida fugitives . . . ; attacked civilians with chemical weapons; attacked the soldiers of an enemy country with chemical weapons; conducted biological weapons experiments on human subjects; committed genocide; and then there is, of course, the matter of the weaponized aflatoxin, a tool of mass murder and nothing else.

"I do not know how any thinking person could believe that Saddam Hussein is a run-of-the-mill dictator. No one else comes close—not the mullahs in Iran, not the Burmese SLORC, not the North Koreans—to matching his extraordinary and variegated record of malevolence.

"Earlier this year, while traveling across northern Iraq, I interviewed more than 100 survivors of Saddam's campaign of chemical genocide. I will not recite the statistics, or recount the horror stories here, except to say that I met enough barren and cancer-ridden women in Iraqi Kurdistan to last me several lifetimes.

"So: Saddam Hussein is uniquely evil, the only ruler in power today—and the first one since Hitler—to commit chemical genocide. Is that enough of a reason to remove him from power? I would say yes, if 'never again' is in fact actually to mean 'never again.'

"At a panel this past weekend on Iraq . . . Richard Holbrooke, who favors regime change, said the best practical argument for Saddam's removal is the danger posed by his weapons programs. He is right, though the weapons argument, separated from Saddam's real-life record of grotesque aggression, loses its urgency. Because Saddam is a man without any moral limits is why it is so important to keep nuclear weapons from his hands. . . .

"The argument by opponents of invasion that Saddam poses no 'imminent threat' (they never actually define 'imminent,' of course) strikes me as particularly foolhardy. If you believe he is trying to acquire an atomic bomb, and if you believe that he is a monstrous person, than why would you possibly advocate waiting until the last possible second to disarm him?

"After returning from Iraq, I dug out an old *New York Times* editorial, which I recommend people read in full. It was published on June 9, 1981, under the headline, 'Israel's Illusion.'

"'Israel's sneak attack on a French-built nuclear reactor near Baghdad was an act of inexcusable and short-sighted aggression,' the editorial states. 'Even assuming that Iraq was hellbent to divert enriched uranium for the manufacture of nuclear weapons, it would have been working toward a capacity that Israel itself acquired long ago.'

"Israel absorbed the world's hatred and scorn for its attack on the Osirak reactor in 1981. Today, it is accepted as fact by most arms-control experts that, had Israel not destroyed Osirak, Saddam Hussein's Iraq would have been a nuclear power by 1990, when his forces pillaged their way across Kuwait.

"The administration is planning today to launch what many people would undoubtedly call a short-sighted and inexcusable act of aggression. In five years, however, I believe that the coming invasion of Iraq will be remembered as an act of profound morality." ♦

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Barbra Spells Trouble

The best political fight of the fall is not Torricelli against the world, but the *Drudge Report* vs. Barbra Streisand. You can read all about it at Matt Drudge's eponymous website. Or, better yet, visit Barbra's "Truth Alert," *www.barbrastreisand.com/news_truth.html*, which promises to rebut any falsehood that "has been written in print, spoken on radio, or aired on television about Ms. Streisand." No rebuttals this week, though; only concessions. Yes, in her remarks to the Democratic National Gala, Babs *was* suckered into reading a fake Shakespeare quote that has been circulating on anti-Bush websites for months. And yes, her office did send a jejune memo full of misspellings to Dick "Gebhart." But, she says, it was dictated. The truth? "Barbra Streisand is a great speller, meticulous in her written communications!" Modest, too. ♦

Not so Civil War

Snackers in Baltimore who went to the 7-Eleven on Sept. 26 needn't have bothered. They could have gone to the NAACP-sponsored Bob Ehrlich-Kathleen Kennedy Townsend gubernatorial debate, where supporters of Townsend passed around Oreo cookies. These were distributed not to be hospitable, but as a racial insult directed at Ehrlich's running mate Michael Steele. (Black on the outside, white on the inside—get it?) Some of Townsend's supporters also booed Ehrlich's family, booed Ehrlich during his opening remarks, keyed his car, and plastered it with Townsend campaign stickers.

In a profile of Townsend two months ago, Matt Labash reported that Ehrlich's camp feared race-baiting from the Townsend campaign. "He must have something to worry about," she said then. "I'll just say there's plenty in his record for anyone to explore." Looks like Ehrlich was right to worry. What, exactly, do Oreo cookies have to do with exploring the candidate's record? ♦

Just Thought You'd Like to Know

"Peter Jennings' coffee-table book *In Search of America* may turn out to be a publishing disaster for Disney-owned Hyperion Books, which shipped a massive 725,000 copies to bookstores last month. In another apparent synergy bust, the book, priced at a whopping $50, has failed to find a significant number of buyers despite being promoted with a five-part miniseries hosted by Jennings last month. The miniseries also failed to attract viewers, producing ratings far below those for the regular ABC programs it preempted (most of which were already low)."

—reported by IMDB.com, Movie and TV News, Oct. 3

Tasteless Headline of the Year

"5 SHOOTING VICTIMS REFLECT MONTGOMERY'S GROWING DIVERSITY"

—Washington Post, Page A1, Oct. 4

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Casual

The Dumb and the Beautiful

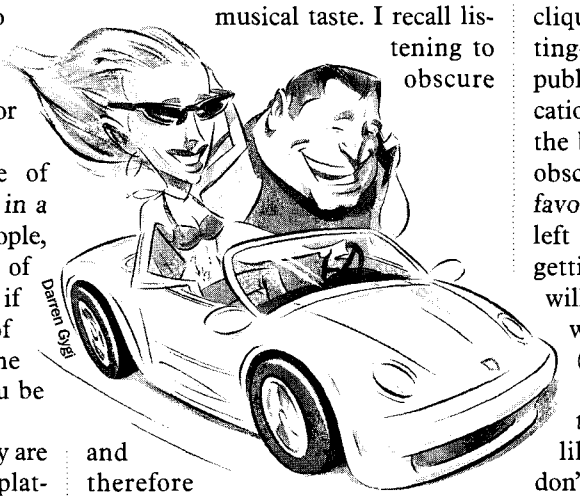
In the past 20 minutes I have seen 4 1/2 acres of pelvic skin. I'm sitting in a sidewalk bar called Wet Willies in the South Beach section of Miami. I'm nursing a phosphorescent blue drink in a plastic cup, and on the sidewalk in front of me there is a parade of young women with their sub-belly-button regions exposed. It's as if Jeb Bush had passed a law forbidding the wearing of any pair of pants that covers any portion of the body that could possibly be considered part of the torso. And so these beautiful people of all ages, with their trousers so low they probably don't have to adjust them to go to the bathroom, are strolling up and down the sidewalk reminding me there is a lot to be said for other people's vanity.

This isn't exactly a parade of MacArthur genius grantees. But in a world stuffed with thoughtful people, South Beach is a refreshing oasis of stupidity. Here it doesn't matter if you have sophisticated views of urban sprawl or the plight of the Kurds. What matters is that you be cool.

The women here are cool. They are about 8 feet tall on their pink platform clogs. Their legs are like elongated Barbie limbs. Their stomach muscles are rippling and buff and you can see an Asian style serpent tattoo burrowing down toward their reproductive regions. It has to be said that some of the older women have clearly taken advantage of Miami's abundant supply of cosmetic surgeons, and their faces are now having trouble keeping pace with their mammaries. If you threw a quarter at one of these women and hit her in the chest, it would become momentarily embedded in the silicon and then it would come rifling back at you at four times its original speed with enough velocity to bore through bone or concrete.

The young men look like Miami Hurricanes in between practice sessions. They wear those shower room Adidas flip-flops, baggy athletic shorts, and sleeveless black T-shirts so perfectly form-fitting that they must be made by Hugo Boss. The coolest of the cool men are driving Porsche Boxster convertibles with their stunningly beautiful girlfriends, whom they are ignoring while talking to their buddies on their cell phones.

Sitting here, I can't remember exactly when I stopped trying to be cool. But I distinctly remember in college I thought that I had cool musical taste. I recall listening to obscure and therefore cool alternative radio stations. I recall being inordinately proud of the fact that I knew it was cool to wear Japanese baseball jerseys even before the boutiques in SoHo started carrying them.



But let's face it, what my friends and I were doing wasn't really being cool. We were just doing academic one-upmanship on shallow subjects. Spending 45 minutes discussing the jazz group Weather Report, we were just playing at connoisseurship, and connoisseurship requires effort and hence is not cool.

The people in South Beach are cool. They send off gravitational waves that alter the status codes for miles around. For example, intermingled with these genuinely cool beach people there are little groups of people like me who are in Miami for conferences or sales meetings. The cool South Beach folk are so indifferent to us and everything we represent that they annihilate us. Their apathy toward our world is actually an offensive force. It overwhelms us, and we acknowledge that we and everything we live for is uncool and therefore pathetic.

Some of the middle-aged men and women visiting this neighborhood are probably titans of industry, pillars of their community. But here they are acutely aware of their own pale, paunchy insignificance.

Because here, all the rules are different. Here there is an entirely different status mountain to climb, and at the tippy top there is the blinding hot clique of elite personal trainers, cutting-edge hair stylists, and powerful publicists. Here your Ivy League education counts for nothing because all the best people went to one of those obscure universities in Switzerland favored by the Eurotrash, and they left after two years anyway without getting a degree. Here your job title will impress no one. The cool people work at Oxygene boutiques (Milan, Paris, Beverly Hills, Miami) and their job is to stand by the door and stare down people like you who wander by, so you don't even think of going in.

Those of us who come here from normal America feel our pathetitude in the presence of these cool and beautiful beach people. Do beach people feel pathetic when they come into our realms and have to measure themselves by our standards? I don't know. I may be a weenie, but I'm not such a weenie that I'm going to pull over a cool person and ask him a question like that. Besides, he'd just stare at me blankly. And then he would make some remark, but wherever the cool people are the dance music is cranked up so high you can't hear what they are saying anyway.

David Brooks

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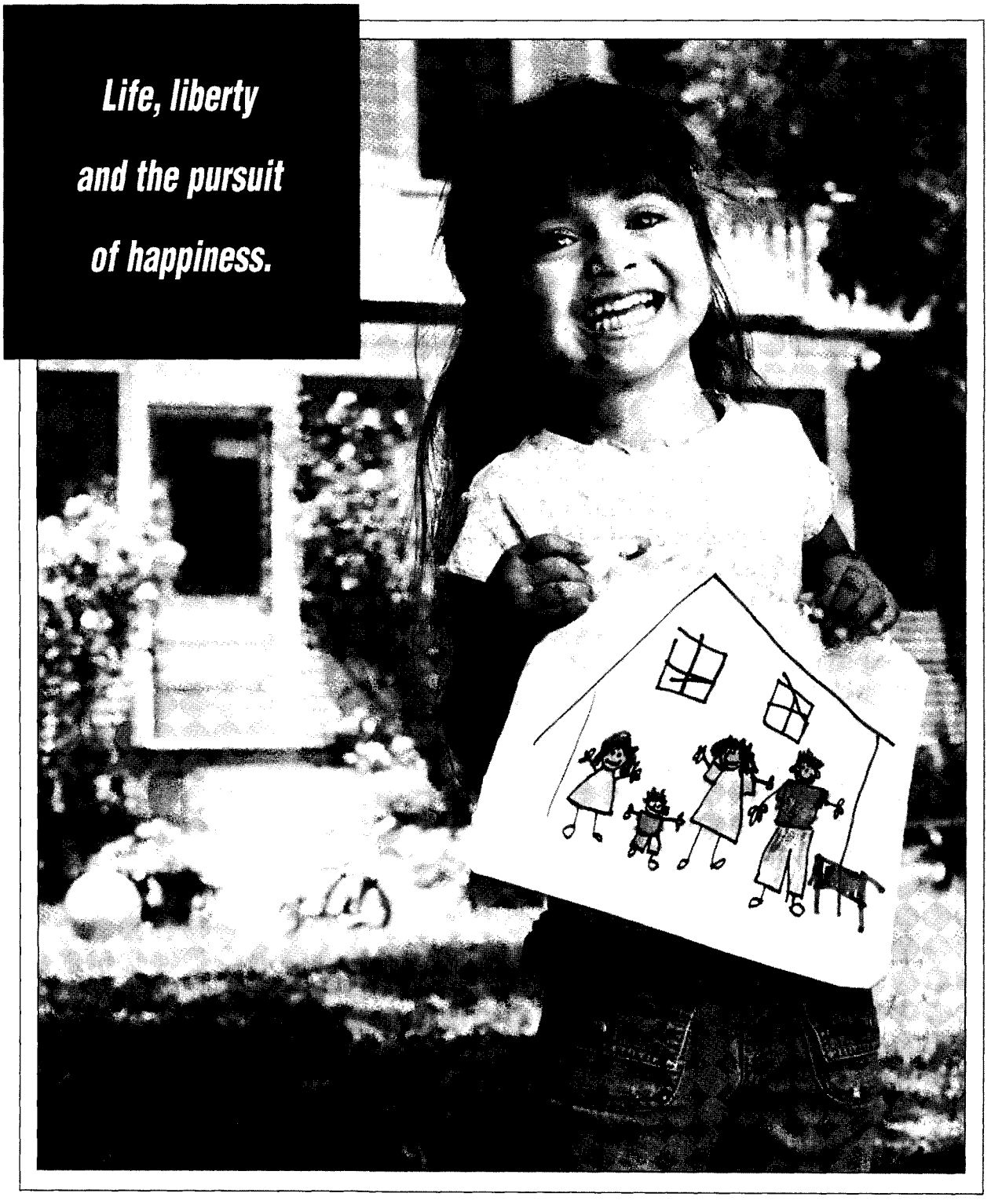

They're the first generation of Castillas to own their own home. They learned about the home buying process and their financing options from a website developed by Freddie Mac. The same company that bought their mortgage from their bank. At Freddie Mac, we work with community groups all over the country to help educate first-time homebuyers. Because families like the Castillas just need a place to start. Homebuyer education could well help 10 million families buy their first homes by the end of this decade. And help us create a nation of homeowners. For details, visit freddiemac.com/homebuyers.

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The Fog of Peace

As a big fan of David Brooks, I read with interest "The Fog of Peace" (Sept. 30), his piece on the left's rhetoric opposing U.S. intervention in Iraq. As an active Republican, I was particularly interested to see whether my own strenuous objections to such an adventure could be found in that catalogue of confusion.

Phew! Brooks grants that to carefully weigh the costs and benefits of intervention was not to be lost in the persuasive fog. Yet he understates the long-term costs involved. Even if intervention succeeds temporarily in installing a friendlier regime in Iraq (a big "if"), to dismiss as "Groundhog Day predictions" the likely explosions in the "Arab Street" and the creation of "a thousand new bin Ladens" is as cloudy as any thinking on the fog-bound left. Even one bin Laden is too many.

While the vision of some on the left may be clouded by partisanship and conspiracy theory, it does not mean that their caution is misplaced. The war on terrorism, like the Cold War, is fundamentally an ideological war. Maintaining the upper hand morally as well as militarily is essential to our ultimate success. It took 40 years, but containment worked against a much greater threat from the Soviet Union than anything posed by Iraq today. In the long run, restraint and vigilance will work better than precipitous violence in proving to the world and to our enemies that America, not Islamic dictatorship, offers the greatest chance for peace, security, prosperity, and human flourishing.

Davis Hartwell
Portland, ME

Kudos to David Brooks on his lucid and devastating critique of wishywashy anti-warriors in "The Fog of Peace." I have been telling friends and family for weeks now "even a broken clock is right twice a day." Thus I find myself a staunch supporter of Bush's policies regarding terrorism and Iraq, despite my conviction that his administration's domestic agenda is bankrupt, bordering on criminal.

Even their foreign policy is marred by an absurd rejection of diplomatic norms; rudeness for its own sake seems a hallmark of this administration, and it has poisoned the waters for them more than they wish to admit. Still, only a fool would argue that Bush and his team have not done tremendously well abroad since September 11. And of late they have little to apologize for, unlike my erstwhile friends on the left.

Bush's hand around the collar of the Rumsfeldian dogs of war has proved more effective, without a single shot being fired, than all the multilateralist drivel of the Clinton years combined.

Kelli Kobor
Arlington, VA

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Gerrymandering

Iowa's approach to redistricting is commendable and appropriate, as described in Fred Barnes's "Where Incumbents Tremble . . ." (Sept. 30). Compactness and attention to communities of interest should be paramount in drawing districts.

Unfortunately, however, Iowa's approach is not available to states subject to the Voting Rights Act. In those states, all other considerations are subordinated to the requirement to maximize minority representation.

Consider Georgia. Its present House delegation consists of eight white Republicans and three African-American Democrats. It gained two seats in the 2000 census. To the extent that they could do so within the constraints of the Voting Rights Act, the Democrat governor and legislature created a grossly gerrymandered scheme for the thirteen new districts. Clearly the three African-American districts will remain so (with the welcome elimination of Cynthia McKinney in one of those districts). Two other districts are likely to be taken by African Americans, although one of them is in doubt, in part because the Democratic candidate is the son of an ethically challenged state senator who designed the district for his son.

Of the other eight districts, white Republicans are heavily favored in seven. In the eighth, a white Democrat and a white Republican appear to be in a dead heat.

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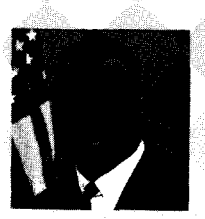

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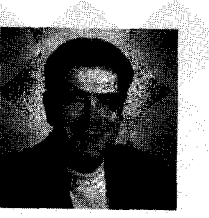

Rev. James Robison

"...for such a time as this."
(Esther 4:14)

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In 1965, the Voting Rights Act was a necessary remedy for deep-seated political discrimination. It has now become a law with unintended consequences. The Voting Rights Act virtually excludes white Democrats from House seats in states subject to it.

As a lifelong Republican I recognize the advantage the act gives to my party. Nevertheless, I believe the United States would be better served if all states could follow Iowa's approach.

JAMES F. TRUCKS
Alpharetta, GA

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TOTAL FREE DISTRIBUTION	2,168	2,210
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	61,055	54,697
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TOTAL	72,484	63,302
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I certify that all information furnished above is true and complete.
Terry Eastland, Publisher

WWII: THE SEQUEL

DAVID GELERNTER'S "The Roots of European Appeasement" (Sept. 23) is fascinating. His contrast of the First and Second World Wars highlights important distinctions and rightly questions our tendency to lump them together like a blockbuster film and its sequel (*WWI* and *WWII*!). Unfortunately, this is all at the service of calling into question European attitudes toward the United States and Iraq. It's certainly true that Saddam Hussein is more like Hitler than he is like Kaiser Wilhelm II, but he's not really much like either one. The insistence on seeing Iraq in the light of either example is disingenuous—the circumstances are too different to warrant easy comparisons. Hussein is certainly a brutal dictator with imperial ambitions, but he's also a fading and failed imperialist—his war with Iran (which, for some reason, the American press keeps forgetting to mention was supported by the Reagan-Bush administration) left his nation depleted, and his invasion of Kuwait was a complete disaster.

That's not to suggest the United States or Europe should simply do nothing about either his pursuit of dangerous weapons or his vicious internal rule. But there's a wide gulf between doing nothing and launching a full-scale invasion. And there are a range of ideas filling that gulf, both for the United States and Europe. In his eagerness to connect twenty-first-century Europe to 1920s Europe, Gelernter ignores the very real possibility that Europeans did learn some things about the causes and effects of imperialism and aggression from the past century—things the United States has so far had the luxury to avoid.

JESSE FOX MAYSHARK
New York, NY

CORRECTION

IN "CAIR-LESS WITH THE TRUTH," by Jake Tapper (Oct. 7), an error in the translation led to the misattribution of a quotation to Nihad Awad, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). It was not Mr. Awad but the interviewer, Sanaa Al-Said of the Egyptian newspaper *El-Osboa*, who said of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, "My belief is that the beneficiary is behind the attack and the biggest beneficiary of the September 11th event is certainly Israel, as it took advantage of it in a wide scale."

Mr. Awad replied to this comment as follows: "There are theories leading in this direction. In my meeting with President Bush and during my conversation with him after last September's events, I said to him that there is talk in the region leading to [the belief that] what happened could not have been carried out by the hand of Muslims or Arabs, due to the gravity and strength of planning and the efficiency of its execution. So he told me, 'The door is wide open for speculation.' I said what indicates that Muslims are not behind this operation is the big contradiction between what was said in the biographies of the suspects, that they were drinking alcohol and sleeping with women, and the behavioral biographies of Bin Laden's group. So Bush said, 'This means that if those that carried out the attack were Arabs, then non-Arabs and non-Muslims could be behind them.'" (The White House denied the content of this conversation.)

We regret the mistake and apologize to Mr. Awad and CAIR for the misattribution.

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the weekly Standard

Not So Innocents Abroad

In last week's episode, much of respectable Washington was aghast that the Bush White House had "politicized" the possibility of war by questioning the patriotism of congressional Democrats who opposed the president's Iraq policy. Respectable Washington was mistaken about all this. First off, war is an intrinsically and legitimately political issue, partisan debate about which is nothing to be aghast over. And while it would indeed have been beyond the pale for the president and his men to smear Democratic dissent as *per se* disloyal, no such smear had actually been forthcoming. Neither, for that matter, had any serious Democratic dissent emerged to begin with; "What about our domestic economy?" hardly constitutes a muscular and forthright argument against the use of U.S. military force overseas. Still, confusion reigned and little plot twists like these went unresolved.

Just before the credits rolled, however, a potentially clarifying development unexpectedly appeared in the script: Three Democratic House members took off on a "fact-finding" trip to Baghdad and Basra, where two of them, David Bonior of Michigan and Jim McDermott of Washington, at a series of site visits helpfully arranged by Iraqi functionaries, repeatedly and vigorously endorsed even the grossest falsehoods of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath party propaganda. In other words, the Bonior-McDermott delegation (Rep. Mike Thompson of California was largely silent throughout the trip and now plainly wishes he'd stayed home altogether) violated a fundamental protocol of American government. To wit: Elected federal officials traveling abroad, especially when they are guests of an officially designated terrorist state, are not supposed to attack, and thereby undermine, the national security policies of the United States.

So. Here at last we had, whatever else might be said about it, a genuine, unqualified rejection of renewed war in the Persian Gulf. Rejection of a distinctly partisan cast. And rejection so extreme in manner and substance as to challenge the ordinary connotative boundaries of the term "loyal opposition." Presented, courtesy of Reps. Bonior and McDermott, with such a rich, steaming stew of fresh and relevant material, surely both the White House and the Democratic congressional leadership would find reason, and feel eager, to settle their still echoing controversy over war politics and patriotism?

No, it hasn't happened. Oh, sure, a number of congressional Republicans—and innumerable spokespundits for the Party of Journalism—have pronounced on the thing. Most of which commentary has focused, understandably, on some peculiar advice McDermott has offered about whom Americans can confidently trust in a dispute between George W. Bush and Saddam Hussein. McDermott, a 14-year veteran of the House, has long been known on Capitol Hill for below-average intelligence and an addiction to intemperate speech. But this time the honorable gentleman has clearly outdone himself.

On the eve of his mission to Baghdad, McDermott was heard to suggest that President Bush would probably lie to us in order to justify another attack on Iraq. And after he arrived in Baghdad, pressed on this point during a satellite interview with George Stephanopoulos of ABC News, McDermott refused to budge: "I think the president would mislead the American people." By contrast, Saddam Hussein would *not* mislead the American people. "I think," said McDermott, again using that word very loosely, that "you have to take the Iraqis on their face value" when they promise, for the umpteenth time, finally to cooperate with an effective United Nations weapons-inspection program.

In defense of these unusually stupid remarks, McDermott cites Lyndon Johnson's Tonkin Gulf resolution—and claims to have earned from that experience a special entitlement to disbelieve any such presidentially asserted *casus belli*: "Both David [Bonior] and I were in that war." Not so his critics, McDermott contends: "Many people who talk about war have never seen it, they've never participated in it"—and they therefore fail to appreciate the battle-tested authority with which he exercises an "American right" to dissent from Bush administration policy. Dissent which must be voiced or "it's not a democracy" anymore.

It is true, sort of, that McDermott and his friend "were in that war." Each man wore his nation's uniform during the late 1960s, McDermott as a psychiatrist at Long Beach

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Naval Station and Bonior as an Air Force cook stationed elsewhere in the Los Angeles metropolitan area. But it is not at all true that denunciations of their recent visit to Iraq are principally grounded in ignorance about the horrors of combat. After all, no more prominent man has any more forcefully complained about Bonior and McDermott's adventures in Baghdad than Sen. John McCain, who, though he was nothing so exalted as a cook or a psychiatrist during the Vietnam War, nevertheless seems adequately qualified to call it "reprehensible" that two members of the House would dare "give comfort to the enemy."

In any case, Bonior and McDermott's status as veterans should be quite beside the point. As should their undisputed "American right" to play Ezra Pound to Saddam Hussein's Benito Mussolini. Their trip was an outrageous breach of official responsibility. Outrageous, in fact, to an extent only fractionally reflected in the random chatter it has so far occasioned. McDermott calling President Bush a liar on a television hookup from Baghdad was the least of it, really.

In Basra, he and Bonior as much as charged the United States with war crimes in connection with the first, 1991 invasion of Iraq. Asked by reporters about Saddam's suspected pursuit of an atomic bomb, Bonior replied that "the only nuclear piece that we've been able to detect here . . . is an incredible, unconscionable increase in leukemias and lymphomas for children that have been affected by this, the uranium that has been part of our weapons system that was dropped here." Bonior's (approving) reference was to Iraqi allegations that trace residues from U.S. explosive shells hardened by low-radiation "depleted uranium" have widely poisoned Persian Gulf War battlefields. We have done a "horrendous, a barbaric, horrific thing," Bonior said, and "the world community needs to know about it."

The world community already knows about "it," actually. At least 13 Western governments have sent scientific teams to analyze the environmental health effects of depleted-uranium munitions employed in wartime. So has the U.N. And the World Health Organization. And the European Commission. And the British Royal Society. And no such inquiry has ever produced a speck of evidence to substantiate the charges David Bonior would like to resuscitate on behalf of "the children" in Iraq.

On behalf of the grownups now running the government of Iraq, Bonior and McDermott have offered some startlingly aggressive character witness. At any point during their tour, did the congressmen see signs that Saddam Hussein might pose an imminent threat to America and its people? Mr. McDermott: "I mean, after the 7th of December, 1941, that wasn't any question. There was a clear reason [for war]. What is the clear reason here?" Could it be that such a "reason" has been hidden from the congressmen's view? Mr. McDermott, again: "We've gone and looked at diarrhea clinics, we've looked at hospitals taking care of kids who have cancer and so forth, and we've looked at water filtration plants. We have had complete access to anything we want here, and they have not kept us from anything we asked to do." Isn't it true, though, that the Iraqis are insisting that international observers be barred from more than 1,000 government installations, on 12 square miles of total property? Those are mosques, explains Mr. Bonior: "They don't want to be having knocks on the door during prayer." And if they turn out not to be mosques? If it turns out Iraq maintains a weapons of mass destruction program, would a U.S.-led preemptive assault be justified then? Mr. Bonior, again: "No. I wouldn't support military action in this endeavor at all."

Even as McDermott and Bonior were still on the ground in Baghdad, issuing their all's well cry, Iraqi vice president Taha Yassin Ramadan was telling the world, by way of Lebanese television, that *his* government reserved the right to launch a preemptive first strike—against American and allied targets, military or civilian, anywhere in the world. Where war is concerned, Ramadan promised, "*we'll* decide when it happens." Iraq "has the right to confront the aggressors on its land and in any place the aggressors are found. An enemy is an enemy. . . . Any American, British, or Zionist interests on Arab land or within reach of Arabs, wherever they are, I consider as legitimate."

Ramadan's threat does not apply to Reps. Bonior and McDermott, presumably.

Come to think of it, they've gotten off relatively easy here at home, too, bad reviews from the talk shows and people like McCain to the contrary notwithstanding. The White House, widely assumed to be on watch for any hint of Democratic resistance to war with Iraq, and eager to use it as partisan ammunition in the coming midterm elections, has largely declined to comment on, much less criticize, either man. And the Democratic leadership on Capitol Hill, as recently as two weeks ago ferociously indignant over any suggestion that home-team spirit against the Iraqi regime might be lacking in its ranks, has uttered nary a peep about Bonior and McDermott—who say the home team is guilty of infanticide, among other things.

The Bush administration makes a wise choice to remain silent here, we think; Bonior and McDermott do not deserve the dignity of presidential notice. But the Democratic party makes a mistake, and does itself a disservice, by continued reluctance publicly to discipline these, its very wayward lambs. Granted, arriving at a coherent position, yea or nay, on the president's Iraq policy has proved a tricky political problem for Democrats, one they have notably failed to solve. But nervous bewilderment does not constitute disloyalty; no one can fairly say that the Democratic party has apologized for Saddam Hussein. David Bonior and Jim McDermott are freaks. They do not speak for their party. And their party, it seems to us, should say so.

—David Tell, for the Editors

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"PRODIGALS INCORPORATED"

Dozing off, thoughts conjured up memories of the legendary Henry J. Kaiser. Suddenly, he appeared. This idea came to me.

"What's on your mind, my boy?" the famous Mr. Kaiser asked.

"Well, Sir, America's current malaise, corporate and financial scandal. What to do about it?"

"Awful for the nation, for the world," said Mr. Kaiser. "I've never seen its like before. Let's hear your thoughts."

"To mention a few business leaders under investigation, some indicted. For starters, Messrs. Koslowski, Winnick, Lay, Ebbers, Rigas and Waksal. The CEOs of Tyco, Global Crossing, Enron, Worldcom, Adelphia and ImClose also, for starters."

"So?"

"Let's say that they get locked up in the same prison as they well may. Always monitored, under close scrutiny, they are ordered to meet with one another and confer. They are directed to have a meeting of the minds, to agree upon a plan to form a new company," I said. It will be called Prodigals Incorporated.

"Interesting. Go on," Mr. Kaiser encouraged me.

"O.K. They decide, agree upon any kind of business, let's say, 'to make a better mousetrap' as the saying goes. It could be any idea, a product or a service, whatever, that they dream up," I told Mr. Kaiser.

"Then?"

"Each CEO, in terms of what is left of his net worth, is ordered to invest a percentage of that sum in the enterprise. The bigger the net worth, the bigger the sum. They're really betting on themselves. That's not bad," I thought. That's for working capital.

"Go on."

"Headquarters, head office, call it what you will, is the jail in which they're incarcerated. Outside is a factory or offices. The felons can select outside management which can hire other employees and workers," I suggested.

"My boy, you've an imagination running free as a wild horse," Henry J. Kaiser flattered me. "Go on!"

"As to shareowners, stockholders, they get a free ride. Shares are given out to these individuals and institutions and other entities who suffered most, the greatest percentage losses in the companies run earlier by the imprisoned CEOs. Remember, the working capital comes from the incarcerated CEOs' own pockets contributed on the basis of a percentage of their current net worth, or what's left of it."

"You have ideas which may lead to better ones," Mr. Kaiser told me.

"Something else," I told Mr. Kaiser, "Why not put these crooked CEOs to work on something honest? Why not their money on the line to lose or win? What's best is that they're like the prodigal's return to virtue and repentance," I said.

"Anyway, it's an outline of what could be feasible, it seems to me," said Mr. Kaiser.

"It's better than a lot of talented one-time crooked CEOs sitting in jail twiddling their thumbs at the expense of American taxpayers," I suggested.

"You've got a point, my boy," Mr. Kaiser replied. "Only in America can a prodigal find pardon and another chance to return to righteousness."

"Amen to that," I said as Mr. Kaiser shook my hand and left.

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The Baghdad Democrats

David Bonior and Jim McDermott create a headache for their party. BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

IT'S A RARE POLITICAL MOMENT when Terry McAuliffe says no comment. Yet McAuliffe, the garrulous chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said just that last Wednesday at the Brookings Institution after a speech by Al Gore. Asked about the trip to Baghdad taken by three of his fellow partisans—Representatives David Bonior, Jim McDermott, and Mike Thompson—McAuliffe was nonplussed.

"Have we issued anything on that?" he asked DNC spokeswoman Jennifer Palmieri, who shook her head.

"I don't think we have," he said with a shrug of his shoulders.

"We handle the politics, and leave those comments to elected officials," Palmieri explained. "But nice try."

Problem is, the elected officials aren't saying much either. Bonior was until recently the second-ranking Democrat in the House, and yet it's nearly impossible to get Democrats to say anything about his and the others' trip to Baghdad.

But if other Democrats aren't talking about the Baghdad tour, Bonior and McDermott themselves won't shut up. And the more they talk, the more scrutiny they invite.

The controversy ignited on September 29 when Bonior and McDermott appeared from Baghdad on ABC's *This Week*. Host George Stephanopoulos asked McDermott about his recent comment that "the president of the United States will lie to the American people in order to get us into this war."

McDermott didn't backpedal at all: "I believe that sometimes they give out misinformation. . . . It would not surprise me if they came out with some information that is not provable, and they, they shift it. First they said it was al Qaeda, then they said it was weapons of mass destruction. Now they're going back to and saying it's al Qaeda again." When Stephanopoulos pressed McDermott about whether he had any evidence that Bush had lied, the congressman replied, "I think the president would mislead the American people."

An American official floating unsubstantiated allegations against an American president during a visit to Baghdad would be troubling enough. But McDermott compounded his problem by insisting, despite its twelve years of verifiable prevarication, that the Iraqi regime should be given the benefit of the doubt on inspections and disarmament. Said McDermott on *This Week*: "I think you have to take the Iraqis on their face value."

But McDermott and Bonior only accept Iraq's more conciliatory statements at face value. They selectively ignore those statements by Iraqi officials defying the international community's demand for unfettered inspections. Even after Iraqi vice president Taha Yassin Ramadan made clear that inspectors would not be allowed into presidential sites—some 12 square miles of Iraqi territory—McDermott claimed the Iraqi regime really wanted to be accommodating. "They have given us assurances that there will be unfettered inspections," McDermott said at an October 2 press conference he held with Bonior after returning from Iraq. "In the United States, we have a tradition, we have a Constitution that says if there's a bad person there, we give them due process and inspections is the due process in this example."

At the same press conference, McDermott and Bonior retrospectively revised the primary goal of their trip. (Thompson, who wasn't at that appearance, kept a relatively low profile both on the trip and after his return. He was the only one of the three to emphasize that Saddam Hussein, and not the U.S. government, bears responsibility for conditions in Iraq.) "First of all," said Bonior, explaining the objectives of the trip, "we wanted to impress upon the Iraqi government and the people of Iraq how important it was for them to allow unconditional, unfettered, unrestricted access to the inspectors." It was such an important point that he revisited it later.

> The purpose of our trip was to make it very clear, as I said in my opening statement, to the officials in Iraq how serious we—the United States is about going to war and that they will have war unless these inspections are allowed to go unconditionally and unfettered and open. And that was our point. And that was in the best interest of not only Iraq, but the American citizens and our troops. And that's what we were emphasizing. That was our primary concern—that and looking at the humanitarian situation.

But if the return of inspectors was the "first" and "primary" purpose of the trip on October 2, it wasn't quite as important on September 25. In the joint press release all three congressmen issued before their trip, posted on each of their websites, there were many stated goals, and plenty of criticism of U.S. saber rattling and pounding of war drums. But there was no mention of inspections at all.

Instead there was much talk of "gaining insight into the humanitarian challenges another war on Iraq would have on innocent Iraqis and the dangerous implications of a unilateral, preemptive strike on U.S. national security."

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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It's reassuring to know that these congressmen were concerned about our national security, even if the source of their concern was our president rather than the brutal dictator with weapons of mass destruction the United States is trying to stop. What apparently didn't concern the congressmen was the damage their trip might do abroad to any U.S.-led effort to deal with Saddam. Or any difficulties they may have created for U.S. efforts to fashion a friendly post-Saddam Iraq.

Even before the Baghdad boys left Iraq, media outlets throughout the Middle East gleefully highlighted divisions in the U.S. government and the travels by the "antiwar" congressmen. The *Iraq Daily*, for example, published by Saddam's Ministry of Information, printed daily updates of the trip and posted them in English on their website.

For example, a September 30 report says, "the members of the U.S. Congress delegation has underlined that this visit aims to get acquainted with the truth of Iraq's people sufferings due to ongoing embargo which caused shortage in food and medicine for all Iraqi people." (That article appeared next to a report on Saddam's continuing financial support for the families of Palestinian suicide bombers or, to use the paper's formulation, "intrepid Palestinian uprising martyrs." Also in that issue is an article by American white supremacist Matthew Hale, "Truth About 9-11: How Jewish Manipulation Killed Thousands.")

Two days earlier, on September 28, the *Iraq Daily* carried this report: The "U.S. Congress delegation saw a woman supplicating to Almighty God to revenge from criminal Bush and U.S. administration for the criminal crimes he and his administration perpetrated against Iraqi children through preventing them from the simplest life necessities due to the continuation of the unjust sanctions on Iraq."

On September 27, viewers of Iraqi Satellite Channel Television learned the following (this translation comes from U.S. government sources):

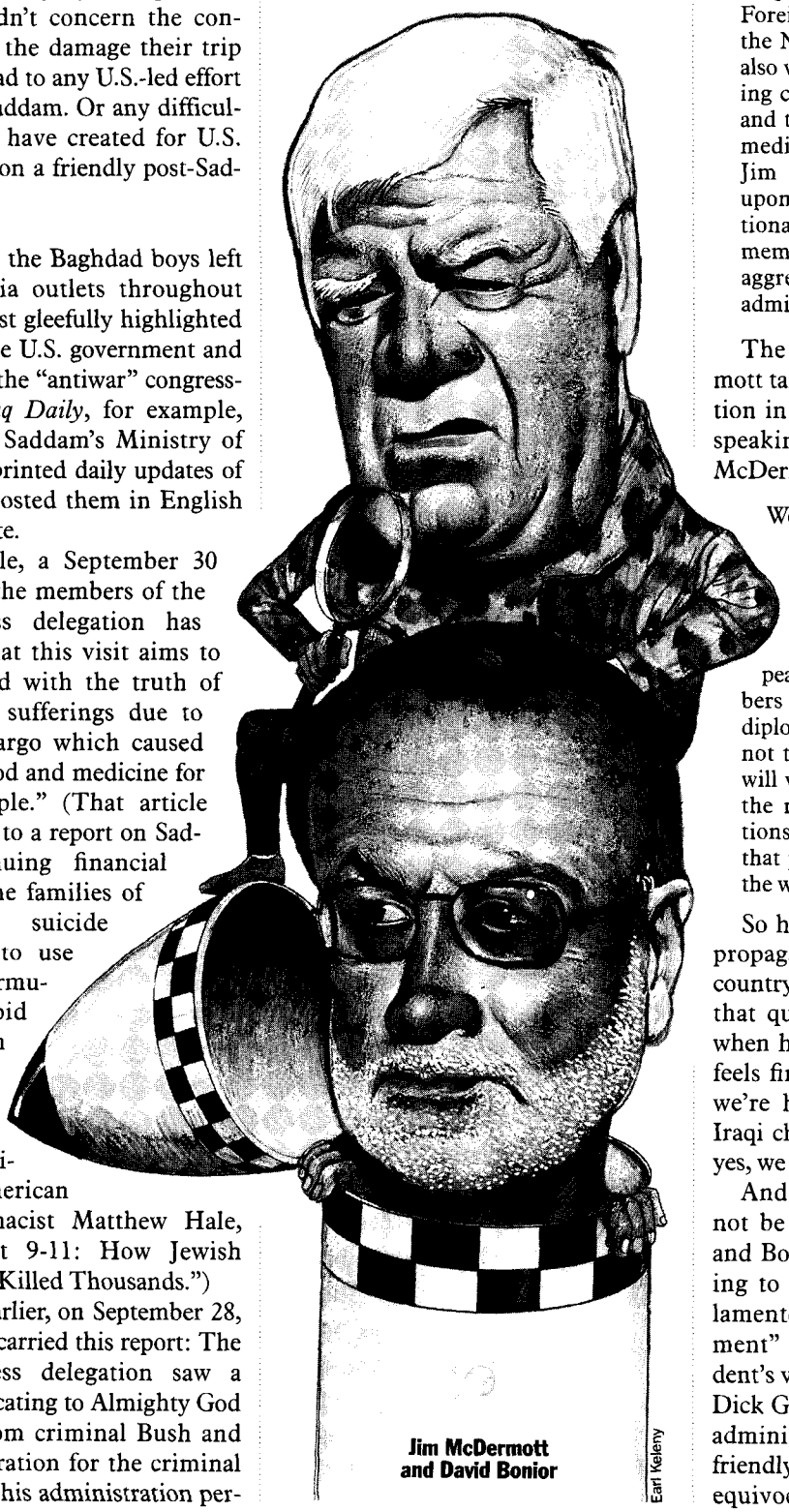
> Three U.S. Congressmen arrived in Baghdad this morning on a visit lasting several days. The delegation will hold several meetings with Iraqi officials and members of the Foreign Relations Committee at the National Assembly. They will also visit hospitals to see the suffering caused by the unjust embargo and the shortage of medicines and medical supplies. Congressman Jim McDermott told reporters upon arrival at Saddam International Airport that the delegation members reject the policy of aggression dominating the U.S. administration.

The video then showed McDermott talking, with a voiceover translation in Arabic. Here is what Arabic-speaking audiences heard from McDermott:

> We are three veterans of the Vietnam War who came over here because we don't want war. We assert from here that we do not want the United States to wage war on any peace-loving countries. As members of Congress, we would like diplomatic efforts to continue so as not to launch any aggression. We will visit children's hospitals to see the negative impact of the sanctions imposed on Iraq. We hope that peace will prevail throughout the world.

So how does it feel to be used as a propaganda tool against your own country? McDermott, who was asked that question by CNN's Jane Arraf when he was still in Baghdad, said it feels fine. "If being used means that we're highlighting the suffering of Iraqi children, or any children, then, yes, we don't mind being used."

And while some Democrats may not be so happy about McDermott and Bonior being used, few are willing to say so. Senator John Breaux lamented McDermott's "overstatement" on the question of the president's veracity. House minority leader Dick Gephardt, who helped the Bush administration craft a White House-friendly congressional resolution, was equivocal about the Bonior-McDer-



Jim McDermott and David Bonior

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mott affair: "I don't agree with his views on some of the facts, and obviously we may not be in agreement on his conclusion about what to do about those facts. But every member, as I've said over and over again, has to reach their own conclusion."

A reporter followed up. "Mr. McDermott implied that the president could not be trusted and Mr. Saddam Hussein could be trusted. That's gotta evoke some sort of feeling within you as to the properness of that comment."

"I don't have all that was said and I'm not here to parse over every word," said Gephardt. "I don't, I don't, I do not agree with his views of the facts, some of the facts, and obviously probably don't agree with his conclusion about what to do with the facts. But that would be the case with a lot of the members of this caucus. And of the other caucus. And that's why we're here."

But at least Gephardt said something. THE WEEKLY STANDARD contacted several other prominent Democrats for comment on the Bonior-McDermott apostasy, including Bill Clinton, Reps. Barney Frank and Nancy Pelosi, and Sens. Hillary Clinton, Tom Daschle, John Edwards, John Kerry, and Joe Lieberman. The only comment we received came from Senator Kerry's spokesman David Wade, who said simply that his boss "disapproved of McDermott's comments."

Republicans say they will continue to raise the issue until Democratic leaders speak out against McDermott and Bonior. "Why haven't Democrat leaders denounced McDermott's odious words? Every American is free to speak their mind, but hurling reckless charges from hostile soil strays over the edge," says House Majority Whip Tom DeLay.

Will other Republicans, either in the House or in political campaigns, follow DeLay's lead? Can the GOP hang Bonior and McDermott around the necks of other Democrats? As Election Day approaches, count on hearing more about the Baghdad Democrats. ♦

Bush's Recruits

Gephardt, McCain, and other surprising allies.

BY FRED BARNES

JUST AFTER LUNCH ON OCTOBER 1, President Bush telephoned House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt. Bush needed help. He wanted negotiations over a congressional war resolution to wind up quickly, so a vote could be held and pressure put on the United Nations to endorse tougher arms inspections in Iraq. A lopsided pro-war vote would have the greatest impact, the president said. But talks between the White House and Congress had dragged on for a week. What can we do to get agreement on a resolution today? Bush asked. Two things, Gephardt said. Include language saying nothing would be done that detracts from the wider war on terrorism outside Iraq and a passage requiring that diplomatic efforts at the U.N. be fully pursued. By the end of the day, an agreement was reached with both of Gephardt's requests met.

Since the September 11 terrorist attacks, Bush and Gephardt have forged a warm and productive relationship. Gephardt is likely to seek the Democratic presidential nomination against Bush in 2004, but that's had no effect on their friendship. Over the past year, Bush has talked to Gephardt more than any other Democrat in Washington. He likes and trusts him, and the feeling is mutual. At meetings with Democratic and Republican House members—with Gephardt absent—the president has gone out of his way to praise him. Their alliance on combating Iraq shows Bush's effectiveness in developing a powerful Democratic supporter and Gephardt's courage in breaking with Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and other Democrats on the war issue.

Gephardt isn't Bush's only unusual bedfellow on Iraq. There's his Republican nemesis, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, and an influential Democrat from California, Rep. Howard Berman. Bush has embraced McCain as never before. McCain published an essay in *Time* over Labor Day weekend, endorsing "the president's sense of urgency about ending the regime of an often irrational aggressor." When Bush saw McCain at a White House session on the homeland security bill the next week, he thanked him profusely. The day after, McCain's office got a late-afternoon call from the White House scheduling office, inviting him to a meeting of congressional leaders and Bush the following morning. McCain's name was presumably added to the list by Bush.

The odd man out is Daschle. He dropped out of the negotiations on a war resolution days before it was worked out. From all accounts, Daschle plays a different game from Gephardt at the bipartisan breakfasts on Wednesday mornings and at other

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Illustration by Darren Gygi

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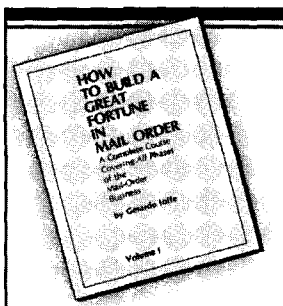
White House meetings. Gephardt often expresses backing for Bush's Iraq policy. At a September 10 breakfast, he was quoted by Mort Kondracke in *Roll Call* as saying to Bush: "Regime change in Iraq has been the declared policy of the United States and it should be our policy. Saddam Hussein is a bad guy. We've got to get him out of there. You have my full support." Daschle's tack is to raise questions and present problems. He annoys Bush. "Their relationship is totally dysfunctional," says a congressional Democrat. Even attempts to work through intermediaries have failed.

With Gephardt and McCain, Bush has been pushing on an open door. In a speech last June, Gephardt declared his support for regime change in Iraq. The United States should use "military means if we must to eliminate the threat [Hussein] poses to the region and our own security," he said. As for McCain, he's had many disagreements with Bush—tax cuts, health care, guns, campaign finance—but national security isn't one of them. He's an unwavering hawk. And while relations between Bush adviser Karl Rove and the McCain camp are nonexistent—a product of the 2000 GOP presidential primaries—national security adviser Condoleezza Rice has filled the gap. She speaks frequently to McCain and briefs him on foreign and defense issues.

In Berman's case, he had to do the pushing on the White House door. He's long seen Saddam Hussein as an international menace, and grew worried last August when the Bush administration appeared to be in disarray on how to deal with Iraq. He called a friend on Vice President Dick Cheney's staff. "What's the administration doing?" Berman asked. "I know nothing. No one's ever talked to me." A week later he heard from Nick Calio, the president's lobbyist on Capitol Hill. The result: a series of meetings at the White House between Bush and bipartisan groups of 8 or 10 House members. Berman, for one, is persuaded the president is not using the war for political purposes. Bush is seeking a resolution that will generate strong Democratic support, Berman says, not one that allows Republicans to accuse them of opposing the president during a war. And Bush has met with uncommitted Democrats in marginal seats who'll be able to trumpet their consultation with the president.

Gephardt has needed support on Iraq, and Berman has been there for him. Following Gephardt's appearance at a Rose Garden ceremony announcing the agreement on a war resolution, his motives were attacked in a front-page article in the *Washington Post*. The thrust was that being pro-war would aid a Gephardt presidential run in 2004. Probably not. Voters in Democratic primaries are disproportionately liberal and antiwar. After Gephardt's anti-Iraq address in June, Berman says, "I may have been one of the few Democrats who went up to him and said, 'Great speech.'" Gephardt has also been plied with hawkish memos from John Weaver, once McCain's chief strategist and now a Democratic consultant.

Gephardt probably doesn't need them. He was deeply affected by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Since then, he's repudiated his vote against the Gulf War in 1991. He's spent more time with Bush, including a 90-minute talk aboard Air Force One, a week after the attacks, than he ever did with President Clinton. Now he argues September 11 has lowered what's required to justify an attack on Iraq. "The standard of proof that you look for has to be reduced because of the presence of large numbers of terrorists and the whole history of Saddam Hussein and Iraq," he told Kondracke. Bush couldn't have said it better. ♦



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Tony Blair vs. the Labour Party

He's pro-American; they're not.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

Blackpool, England

"THE BASIC VALUES of America are our values too . . . and they are good values." To Americans, that statement by Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his speech to last week's annual Labour party conference, sounds uncontroversial, even banal. But to many of the rank-and-file members of his party, any praise of America, especially in the context of a statement of support for our position on Iraq, is praise too far. As the *Financial Times* put it, "they listened politely if sulkily."

"They" include delegates who still address one another as "comrades." Many support the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (Tony Blair is the most famous former member), which wants Britain to abandon its nuclear Trident submarines and which claims in one of the leaflets handed to delegates that "the only state to unconditionally support an attack [on Iraq] is Israel." Others want to stop fox hunting; have joined with Emily's List to demand that the party select replacements for retiring members of parliament from an all-women shortlist; and, more sensibly, are lobbying for a reduction in taxes on Scotch whiskey, "an international sales success for the UK."

The day before Blair took to the podium he was forced to withdraw a resolution backing the use of military force in Iraq, lest he be handed a humiliating defeat by the delegates. And a motion opposing war in any circumstances, even with United Nations support, was defeated by only 60-40 percent. So Blair had to settle for a resolution that endorsed action against Iraq only with the blessing of the U.N.

Or so it seemed to the delegates, who grudgingly compromised to allow adoption of what they saw as a middle ground position, and one that moves Britain out of the American orbit and into the sphere of the much-admired U.N. Privately, the prime minister says the language in that resolution permitting him to act in accordance with international law gives him enough wriggle room to back America even if the U.N. "bottles out" (English for "chickens out"). He plans to do so, even though his top officials tell me the political consequences will be dire.

I kept notes on the applause lines in the almost hour-long speech in a meeting hall so hot that Blair thanked its owners for arranging a sauna. Blair regaled the audience with a chortle about Europe's victory over the U.S. golfers in the Ryder Cup, and then added, "Me and George Bush on different sides." Long applause, prompting the prime minister to joke, "I knew you'd like that."

The balance of his remarks were designed to persuade his audience that his support of President Bush is principled, and not a matter of reducing Britain to the status of an "American poodle," as his critics charge. "My vision of Britain is not as the 51st state of anywhere, but I believe in this alliance [with America] and I will fight long and hard to maintain it, because it is in the interests of this country."

Blair continued with an attack on the resentment of America that was palpable among the trade unions and their allies in the hall: "The Americans stand strong and proud, but at times resented. . . . It's easy to be anti-American. There's a lot of it about, but remember when and where this alliance was forged: here in Europe, in World War II, when Britain and America and every decent citizen in Europe joined forces to liberate Europe from the Nazi evil." This got more than polite but somewhat less than enthusiastic applause.

The crowd's enthusiasm was reserved for references to working within the U.N. (failure to act "will destroy not the authority of America or Britain but of the United Nations itself"); to fighting poverty so as "to give Africa hope"; to nation-building in Afghanistan; and to some, but not all, references to the Israeli-Palestinian war. "I agree U.N. resolutions should apply here as much as to Iraq"—long, loud applause. "But they don't just apply to Israel. They apply to all parties." Not a sound.

So Tony Blair faced an audience best described as violently opposed to having Britain back the United States should we move against Saddam without U.N. sanction; reluctantly willing to go along with such a move if it has U.N. blessing, the unspoken thought being that military action is highly unlikely once the U.N. gets involved; and generally in agreement that a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict should come before any action in Iraq.

No one was fooled by the obligatory standing ovation Blair received after his speech, which the government officials I spoke with thought was too pro-American. After all, he had defended America and the values it represents in the strongest possible terms, made clear that maintenance of his nation's "special relationship" with America remains at the core of British foreign policy, and argued that Britain's interest and his

Irwin M. Stelzer is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, *director of regulatory studies at the Hudson Institute, and a columnist for the* Sunday Times *(London).*

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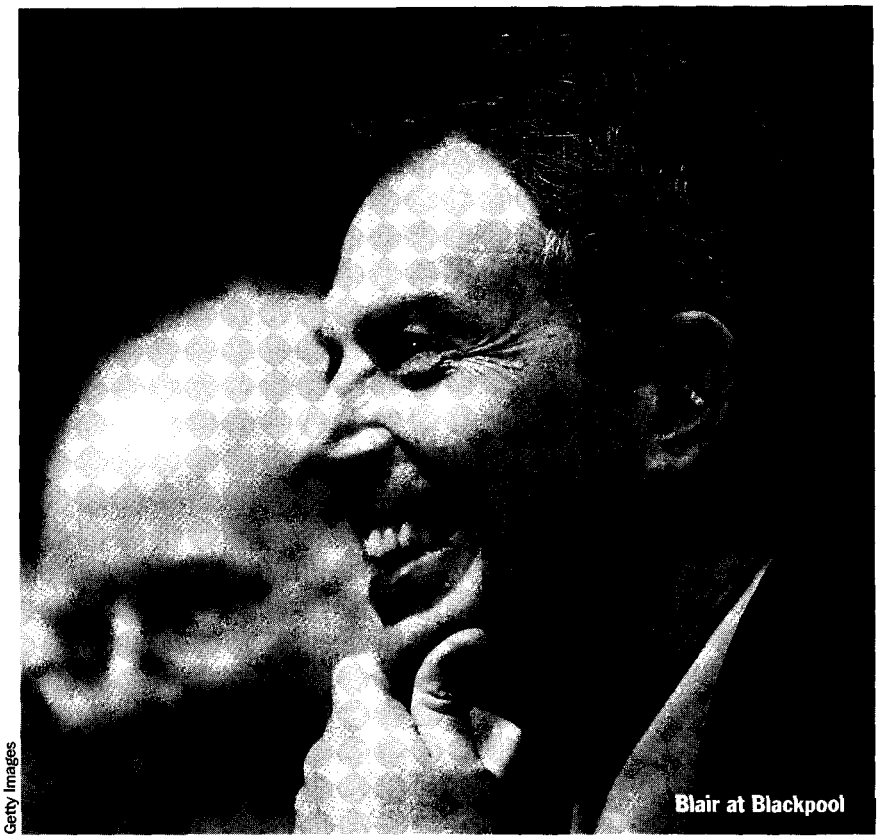

Getty Images

Blair at Blackpool

own sense of morality required his country to support American efforts to disarm Iraq. It was undoubtedly wise of him to reject the suggestion of one of his more playful advisers to begin his speech by addressing the delegates, à la FDR, as "My fellow Americans."

He also told the trade union leaders, many of the recently elected ones out to give him what one described as "a f—ing migraine," that the old socialist system, and the party's subservience to the unions, is a thing of the past. "Out goes a culture of benefits and entitlements. In comes a partnership of rights and responsibilities." The government will continue to rely on private-sector financing of new schools and hospitals, even though the delegates overwhelmingly voted to abort that program.

Blair knows how to count. And his count showed that the trade union delegates, who dominate the conference and whose members produce the public services (health care, transportation, and education), are opposed to all reforms, whereas the unaffiliated delegates from the constituencies, the consumers of public services, voted two-to-one for continuing to use private funds to improve the delivery of those services. And there are more consumers than producers in the country, if not in the Blackpool conference hall.

So a cynic could defend Blair's call for domestic reforms as pragmatic. But not his support of America against Iraq. That's costing him politically. When Britain went to war at America's side in 1991, tens of thousands of Labour party members resigned, gashing a hole in the party's budget; many more are said to be threatening to do so this time around. Even the delegates at the party conference, the hard-core loyalists, were decidedly unenthusiastic. Several of his cabinet members are muttering about resigning if he joins America in an attack lacking U.N. authorization.

The Blairites are counting on the fact that the prime minister is a vote-getting phenomenon who has reduced the opposition Tories to electoral impotence. (The Tories helped out by assuming that a softer, kinder image is more likely to restore them to power than is adherence to conservative principles.) The Blairites know, too, that for all the talk of resigning, his ministers are reluctant to give up their salaries, government cars, overseas junkets, and other perks by bringing Blair down over the mere matter of war and peace. But should he back America in the absence of a new U.N. mandate, and should the disarming of Saddam (regime change is a goal not even Blair dares to openly defend) prove a protracted and bloody affair, the knives will be out. After all, the very weakness to which Blair has reduced the opposition might tempt Labour dissidents to believe their party can hold onto power led by the formidable chancellor and heir apparent Gordon Brown, whose lavish spending on the public sector and notable lack of support for the prime minister's pro-American position on Iraq have made him the darling of the Labour left.

So why can't Blair be more like the French, and find a clever way of seeming to support disarmament of Iraq while at the same time removing the threat of force that would make such disarmament possible? Or more like the appalling Gerhard Schröder, who managed to forget what Blair cannot—America's contribution to the downfall of Hitler's government—in the name of electoral popularity? Or more like Bill Clinton, who addressed an adoring conference (before descending on the local McDonald's) and bravely called upon all of us to work for regime change in Iraq "in non-military ways"? (BBC radio reports that the old Clinton seductiveness is undiminished by the lack of the formal trappings of office. One reporter, after hearing the former president's speech, breathlessly told reporters, "I need a fag [cigarette]; I always smoke after I've been made love to.")

The answer to those questions can be found in Blair's speech to the Economic Club in Chicago on April 22, 1999. He told the audience, consist-

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ing largely of businessmen, that "many of our problems have been caused by two dangerous and ruthless men—Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. . . . Both have brought calamity on their own peoples." We must, he went on, be guided by a "subtle blend of mutual self-interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish . . . the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society. . . . The principle of non-interference must be qualified in important respects. . . . Armed force is sometimes the only means of dealing with dictators."

That speech made public what those who have talked to Blair privately have long known—he has a moral streak that impels him to envision and seek a world order in which the good guys have not only a right but an obligation to stop the bad guys (evildoers, in Bushese) from doing bad things to helpless people. It is Wilsonianism writ large and muscular. There are values of decency, democracy, tolerance, and justice that should be made available to all people, and if that means disregarding national boundaries to right wrongs by using military power, so be it. Self-determination is fine, but "when regimes are based on minority rule they lose legitimacy," and international intervention is justified. Hence the prime minister's tough stance in Kosovo, in what many regarded as a civil war in which outsiders had neither the right nor the obligation to intervene.

Clearly, Britain acting alone can't make the world the sort of place that Blair wants it to be. Hence, his desire to strengthen the special relationship, one that everyone thought would become a thing of the past when Blair's "Third Way" buddy Bill Clinton ceded the Oval Office to compassionate conservative George W. Bush. Blair's spontaneous reaction to the terror attacks on America, his shoulder-to-shoulder stance and rushed visit to America to show support, was more instinctive than calculated. It came at a time when his country's media were seeking to convert victim to perpetrator by blaming the attack on America's support of Israel. Blair and Bush may have different accents and different styles—recall that after their first meeting at Camp David the only thing Bush could think of that they had in common was their brand of toothpaste—but they share a religious and moral code that causes them to see many things in terms of evil versus good.

Blair knows that Britain cannot take on the Milosevics and Saddam Husseins of the world alone. He also knows that America will not forever carry the burden of policing Europe's backyard. So he continues what thus far has been a futile effort to persuade his European partners to beef up their defense capabilities so that they can ride to the rescue of the afflicted in their own area of responsibility without relying on America to provide the transport. Germany's response last week was to announce cuts in its defense budget.

So far, Blair has achieved his goal of becoming a bridge between America and Europe; witness Schröder's hasty postelection visit to Downing Street to seek the prime minister's help in reopening communications with the American president his colleagues likened to Hitler and the Roman conquerors. But if the U.N. refuses to approve the use of force in Iraq, and Blair nevertheless remains shoulder-to-shoulder with Bush, he will find himself fighting on two other fronts—with his own Labour party, and with his European allies. My guess is that he is willing to fight those battles, both to preserve the Anglo-American alliance, and to act in accordance with his conscience—that "subtle blend of . . . self-interest and moral purpose" to which he referred in Chicago three years ago. ♦

Wedding Bill Blues

Legislation alone can't protect marriage. Time for a constitutional amendment? BY JOSEPH LOCONTE

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, it seems, the status of marriage now depends on who amends the Constitution first. Marriage either will be radically redefined through a gay-rights strategy of litigation, or it will be preserved as we have known it through legislative deliberation and a formal amendment process.

A growing number of lawmakers and religious leaders are coming to believe in the need for a constitutional amendment to protect the definition of marriage as the union of a man and woman. Introduced in May by three House Republicans and three Democrats, the Federal Marriage Amendment would go beyond the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act by preventing any court from granting homosexual unions the same legal status as marriage.

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay and lesbian political group, calls the amendment an "attempt to write a group of Americans out of the Constitution." Amendment supporters, however, say they're trying to thwart an anti-democratic strategy to revolutionize marriage for all Americans. "Activists are trying to use the courts to force an utterly alien and bizarre concept of marriage down the throats of our entire society," says Matt Daniels, president of the Alliance for Marriage

Joseph Loconte is the William E. Simon Fellow in Religion and a Free Society at the Heritage Foundation and a commentator for National Public Radio.

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and the plan's principal architect. "Absent a constitutional amendment, we're defenseless."

Though no state allows gay or lesbian marriages, the courts are on the way. Two years ago in Vermont, judges ordered the legislature to recognize "civil unions" for gay couples, granting them most of the legal benefits of marriage. In Massachusetts earlier this year, the state's liberal Supreme Judicial Court agreed to hear a suit from seven homosexual couples demanding that their partnerships be considered legal marriages. A decision is expected in early 2003, while a similar case is pending in New Jersey.

A court victory for same-sex marriage in any state would instigate an avalanche of lawsuits: Plaintiffs could use the "full faith and credit" clause of Article IV of the Constitution to try to force other states to certify their unions. If successful in federal court, such an approach would take marriage policy out of the hands of state governments. Leading gay organizations, in fact, have made this a top priority. Of the more than 4,600 civil unions granted in Vermont, roughly 85 percent have involved out-of-state residents; at least one of these couples have already sued their home state, Georgia, but lost their bid to receive marriage benefits.

The Defense of Marriage Act, signed into law by President Clinton, says no state can be forced to recognize homosexual unions from other states. Several states also have passed their own legislation or amended their constitutions to ward off same-sex lawsuits.

But it's not clear this strategy will work. The Supreme Court could overturn the Defense of Marriage Act or even find a constitutional right to homosexual marriage. And the federal statute can't prevent the Vermont scenario: state courts' overruling state laws on marriage. Says Bill Wichterman, chief of staff for Pennsylvania Republican Joe Pitts, an amendment co-sponsor: "Gay marriage is coming, it's coming fast, and it's coming through the courts."

These concerns have galvanized conservative legal theorists, activists, and lawmakers. More than two years in the making, the House bill now reads: "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman. Neither the Constitution or the constitution of any state, nor state or federal law, shall be construed to require that marital status or the legal incidents thereof be conferred upon unmarried couples or groups."

The first part of the amendment would forbid any court or legislature from conferring the name of marriage on same-sex relationships, while the second would prevent judges from ordering state legislatures to create civil unions or give marriage benefits to homosexual couples. Laws respecting civil unions would be unaffected, supporters say, and states could still grant domestic partnerships the legal benefits of marriage.

A few conservative groups, such as the Family Research Council, have criticized the amendment for not banning same-sex unions outright. On the other hand, the American Civil Liberties Union claims it would "wipe out every single law" protecting these partnerships. Hyperbole aside, Robert George, the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, says he helped draft the amendment in order to leave marriage policy where it belongs—with legislatures and the democratic process. "If we ever lose the people on this issue," he says, "constitutional law will not save us."

The amendment idea has attracted a diverse coalition, including the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the Islamic Society of North America, Evangelicals for Social Action, and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Perhaps most striking is the backing from African-American churches. Black leaders cite concern for the integrity of the family, while many express anger that homosexuals invoke the language of the civil rights movement to justify gay marriage.

The House Judiciary Committee has not scheduled hearings on the matter, and aides admit it could take a court ruling in favor of gay marriage to energize the rank and file. With or without such a ruling, advocates of the proposal expect an uphill fight. Passage of a constitutional amendment—requiring proposal by two-thirds of the House and Senate and ratification by three-fourths of the states—is impossible without wide public support. That's exactly what the backers of the amendment are banking on. "Marriage is supported by most Americans and is the most multicultural institution in the world," says Matt Daniels of the Alliance for Marriage. "Woe to us if we can't mobilize a rainbow coalition to defend it." ♦

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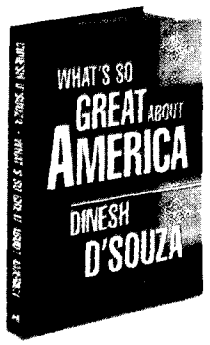

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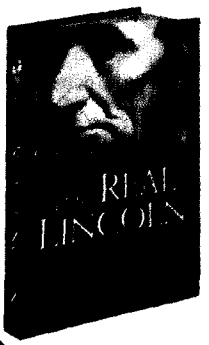

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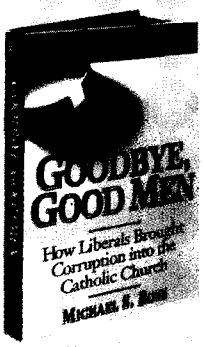

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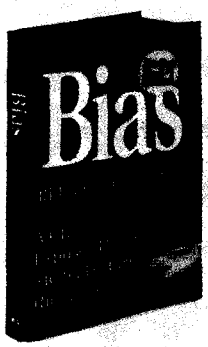

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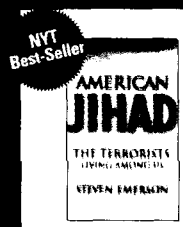

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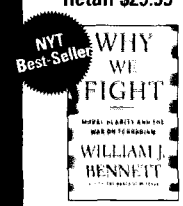

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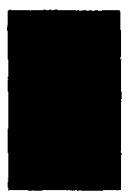

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Why He Drives Them Crazy

Being underestimated is George W. Bush's secret political weapon

By Noemie Emery

When it all boiled over that day in September—with a red-faced Tom Daschle denouncing the president from the Senate floor—George W. Bush had already given the Democrats two very bad years. Two years of predictions that never quite happened. Two years of gotchas that never came through. Two years of hopes dashed.

Two Septembers ago, let us remember, candidate Bush appeared dead in the water. He misspoke, went off message, blew his big lead. In the debates, surely, Al Gore would finish him. Not quite. Bush won the debates. Then Bush won Florida, and Democrats went into what became their default position: (a) Bush wasn't president; (b) Bush was dumb. As to (a), newspaper recounts, they kept telling themselves, would clearly show that Gore won Florida. As to (b), Bush would soon fall flat on his face. Didn't happen. They said Bush couldn't govern; Bush had a honeymoon. Then in late summer 2001, things settled down, and Bush stalled. Democrats could look forward to tormenting Bush for a year, before taking back Congress. Then came the attacks.

For a couple of days, the usual suspects tagged Bush as being both dim and a coward, flying around the country instead of back to Washington. But by the time most of these snipes had seen print, it was September 14, and Bush had been in the morning to the National Cathedral and in the afternoon to ground zero, where he was cheered as a heroic commander in chief in the heart of blue country, in a state he had lost by 28 points. His poll numbers soared. People said his numbers would drop, and so they did drop, all the way down to the 70s, after eight or nine months. Then came a few months of punishing headlines, and liberals brightened. Surely the Teflon would peel off of this poseur. People would see Bush the way that they saw him. People would see.

Or would they? Over and over, hopes budded, blossomed, and then fell away. In April, hopes were pinned on reports that the president "knew something" about the attacks before September 11 and had done nothing about them. What did the president know? Did he know that he knew it? Turns out the problems were in intelligence agencies, and were being corrected. "It seems clear the president has won this round," reported the *New York Post*'s Deborah Orin, who quoted a pollster: "In the short term, it backfired—the Democrats probably helped boost Bush's numbers by pushing the agenda back to terrorism, which is his strength."

Then came a slew of problems that were *not* his long suit. Bush and Cheney's pals at Enron turned out to be presiding over a con game that tanked the company and wiped out the employees' pensions. The stock market tanked, partly because of the scandals. Happy days were here again, weren't they? Democrats did not yet have a candidate for the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt, but surely they had their dream opponent: George Herbert Hoover Bush. "In a few short weeks, America's political economy has been stunningly transformed," wrote Robert Kuttner in the *American Prospect*. "President Bush is suddenly in trouble. . . . The Bush administration, the Republican party, and three decades of conservative ideology are facing a potential rout." And properly so. "How utterly fitting. Bush's own financial biography, on a pettier scale, epitomizes the corruption that now threatens the whole system. . . . Bush irrevocably symbolizes the tawdriness of crony capitalism, right down to his insider self-enrichment based on the sale of the fraudulently inflated Harken stock." Michael Tomasky called the Harken charge the beginning of the end for the president, "the very point at which the spokes started coming off the wheels" for his highness. In the *New Republic*, Ryan Lizza wrote, "For over a week now, President Bush's dodgy stint at Harken

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Energy . . . has followed him around the country like a dark cloud. . . . the White House that dodged the Enron bullet might not be so lucky a second time. . . . Bush isn't only on the defensive on corporate fraud; corporate fraud is putting him on the defensive about almost everything else." Democratic leaders happily counted the possible gains in November, and gleefully tracked the slide in Bush's approval numbers, now falling at a rate of about 4 points a month. By Election Day, his numbers might be down in the 50s, and life would be back to normal. The Democrats' year of living defensively would be blessedly over. How could they miss?

Dale Stephanos

They could miss like this: By late August, Enron and Harken were history. While liberals tried to frame it as "the people versus the powerful," Bush framed it as the straight versus the crooked, with himself on the side of the straight. He had done nothing to help Enron when it went under. No one could find much amiss in his dealings with Harken except for the people who found all business sinister. The "crony capitalism" Bush was said to have symbolized was accepted instead as part of the much older pattern of favors done for children of powerful families (such as the Gores and the Kennedys). The liberals had counted on a theory of guilt by resemblance—i.e., CEOs, oil, and Texas—without much in the way of real evidence. The public decided that the scandals were scandalous, but agreed with Republicans that they were the result of criminal acts, not systemic flaws. They wanted to see the criminal punished so that corporate capitalism could thrive again. No one wanted a new New Deal. In July, a Gallup poll found that respondents still considered big government more of a threat than big corporations, by a margin of 47 percent to 38 percent. A poll by the Pew Research Center even found that "the public, 36 percent to 31 percent, sees the GOP as best able to deal with corporate corruption," the *Washington Post* said in late September.

And as with the scandals, so with the market in general. People had long ago stopped believing that politicians could do much to help the economy. Polls on who could handle it best appeared inconclusive. "The economy is not a clear-cut issue for many voters as they assign blame," the *Washington Post* said in a September 29 story. The pessimists were far more inclined to blame terrorism or the business cycle than Bush. In fact, in the summer some polls found that fewer people blamed Bush than blamed *Clinton*. Talk about pain.

By the start of September, Bush had been off-stage for a month, and the war had moved to the op-ed pages, where GOP heavyweights duked it out with each other. Bush's poll rating fell, all the way down to, oh, 60 or so. Surely this time the Teflon would finally flake off? Democrats murmured once more that Bush wasn't "up to it." In a September 11 anniversary issue, *Time* suggested that perhaps Bush hadn't risen to meet the level of history, that history had for a moment "fallen" to his. In a double issue timed to be on the newsstands on September 11, the *New Republic* informed us: "The sense of destiny that characterized George W. Bush in the weeks and the months after the attacks, that lifted him unexpectedly above his own sorry limitations, was long ago dissipated by business as usual. . . . The hollowness of the president, the poverty of his resources for leadership, is plain, and it is 'partisanship' to find anything Churchillian in the man."

Oops. While this issue was still on the newsstands, Bush addressed the country on September 11 and the United Nations the day after; he recast the Iraq debate on his terms and his timing, quelled the dissension within his own party, boxed the Democrats into the trap in which they are still squirming, and pulled a neat piece of judo on the U.N., putting the burden of action on *them*. Bush's numbers reversed, and recommenced climbing. Republican prospects began to look better. Deep rifts were exposed in the Democratic caucus that had gone unstressed since the end of the Cold War. The one thing that many Democrats seemed to agree on was that Bush had brought up Iraq now for political rea-

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sons. But polls showed that 59 percent of respondents thought Bush was being sincere in his actions, and an equal number thought the *Democrats* were trying to politicize the debate. It was at this point then that Daschle exploded. No wonder. And Democrats cheered. But at the end of the week, polls showed Bush unaffected and Republicans gaining a slight general lead.

Craig Crawford of *Hotline* has suggested that Bush goaded Daschle, hoping to elicit an overreaction. Perhaps. Whether by design or instinct, Bush has a history of driving people who are sure they're much smarter than he is to incredibly silly and self-immolating acts. In the Texas governor's race in 1994, he was the lightweight against the incumbent, Ann Richards, who felt herself demeaned by having to run against him. Making her disdain clear, she addressed him as "shrub" and as "Junior." He addressed her as "Governor Richards." She called him "clueless." He called her "Governor Richards." She called him "the anemic link at the tail end of the gilded Bush dynasty." He said he found her "interesting" as a study in character. At last, she blew up, and called him "some jerk" at a rally. He won by 6 points.

Al Gore thought he was smarter than Bush, and in the debates planned to take out this pretender. He would show off his mental and physical dominance. Condescendingly, Gore sighed, smirked, interrupted, and unleashed tidal waves of details and assertions. Then Bush, as the *Washington Post*'s David von Drehle astutely observed, "read Gore's effort to overshadow him, and, in an odd way, opted to make himself a little bit smaller," becoming relentlessly civil and courteous. It worked. At one point, wrote Jeff Greenfield, "Al Gore left his stool and walked slowly, stiffly, toward his opponent, arms at his sides, palms pointed behind him, looking oddly like [a] robot. . . . Bush glanced over his shoulder, took a beat—and nodded once, as if to say: Hi there—be with you in a moment. The audience laughed, and Al Gore was finished for the night." Something of the same sort seemed to happen to Daschle last week. After his outburst, the White House suggested he might have misread the story that caused it, giving him the chance to back down from his tantrum. He didn't take it, but went back on the floor of the Senate. His purpose was to help his own party's chances. At the end of the week, surveys showed the Republicans for the first time making small gains in congressional polls.

What happens to a dream deferred? Nothing pretty. The liberals' dream of "exposing" the president has now suffered blow upon blow. Simply speaking, their view of Bush—expressed on any given day by Terry McAuliffe, Paul Begala, James Carville, the *Nation*, Michael Kinsley, or the *New York Times*, is still this: George W. Bush is a moron who stole the election, had the great good luck to be president when terrorists struck at our two major cities, benefited unfairly from an irrational wave of hysterical jingoism, and now, when the glow from that burst has been fading, has cooked up a phony war to distract attention from corporate fraud and the stock market crash, which of course he caused. Their failure to sell this analysis to the three-fourths of the country not in the grip of terminal Bushophobia has driven them quite out of their senses. Every day, they get shriller and more desperate. Surely, if Maureen Dowd turns the smirk up one notch, if Frank Rich reviews Bush like another bad movie, the unwashed will awake and see reason? But no.

If you had told a liberal in mid-2001 that in the fall of 2002 the Dow would be somewhere below 8,000 and a cluster of scandals would beset corporate boardrooms, he would scarcely have believed his good fortune. That time has now come, these factors are present, and that liberal can scarcely believe his bad luck. There are two possible explanations: Either he has overestimated the extent to which his worldview is shared by the public, or he has underestimated George Bush. Neither idea is appealing. What kind of a populist are you if the people aren't with you? What kind of an intellectual are you if you aren't smarter than Bush? How can people so smart, and whose views are so popular, be beaten so often by someone so clueless? The idea that George Bush is a gifted politician whose views are quite mainstream would make their world crumble. On the other hand, if they are so often trounced by an out-of-touch moron, then what does it say about them?

And so it goes, in a widening gyre, with each new defeat feeding the fury. Bush-haters want their elected leaders to rip into the president, like the *Times* in full petulance. But this sort of thing hit a brick wall a year ago. The day after Daschle's ill-conceived tirade, vulnerable Democrats running for office clustered around Bush at a photo-op, hoping to be there in the picture if and when it was published at home. Republicans love Bush. Swing voters like him, as do quite a few moderate Democrats who are willing to fight him on this or that issue, but have no stomach for slashing attacks. In short, what the Democrats need to inspire their base is exactly what tends to turn off swing voters, putting success out of their reach. Hatred of Bush is becoming a weapon that helps him by dividing his political enemies. Bush is said to believe that in the terrorist attacks he discovered his "mission and moment," the work of his life, and its meaning. This may be true, but it's only part of the story. Bush's other destiny is driving Democrats nuts. ♦

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The Immutable Laws of Maureen Dowd

A guide to reading the New York Times *columnist*

By Josh Chafetz

Maureen Dowd's *New York Times* columns used to be fun. Whether you agreed with her or not, they were witty and incisive. Sometimes they were even insightful. But recently, many readers are asking the same question as a letter writer to the *Denver Post*: "What has happened to Maureen Dowd lately? . . . she is no longer informative, clever or entertaining, just childish and vindictive." The truth is, Maureen Dowd hasn't changed; the times have. She's always been a formulaic writer, but the formula has never been less appropriate (and therefore more conspicuous) than it has since September 11, 2001. The formula consists of five basic principles that underlie almost all of her writing.

**The First Immutable Law of Dowd*: The first and most important rule is what might be termed the *People* magazine principle: All political phenomena can be reduced to caricatures of the personalities involved. Any reference to policy concerns or even to old-fashioned politicking is, like, *so* passé. And, of course, with every caricature goes a nickname.

The First Law is the reason that Dowd used to be so much fun to read—it's the reason she won the 1999 Pulitzer for her columns on the Lewinsky scandal. The Lewinsky scandal *was* all about personality; more than that, it was about personalities that lent themselves to caricature. So when Dowd wrote about President Clinton ("the Grand Canyon of need") and Monica Lewinsky (the "relentless" woman "clinging to some juvenile belief that the President loved her") and Linda Tripp (who "rides on a broomstick") and Ken Starr (a "sex addict"), it just seemed apt.

Josh Chafetz is a graduate student in politics at Merton College, Oxford, and the co-editor of oxblog.blogspot.com, *where the Immutable Laws of Dowd were developed with some help from readers (especially Stephen Green and Sean Roche).*

The problem is, the nation now has matters of life and death to attend to. But Dowd is still drawing caricatures. For instance, her September 25, 2002, column compares Bush administration officials to middle school "alpha girls" for snubbing Gerhard Schröder's German government after it ran for reelection on an anti-American platform. Says Dowd, "now we have the spectacle of the 70-year-old Rummy acting like a 16-year-old Heather, vixen-slapping those lower in the global hierarchy, trying to dominate and silence the beta countries with less money and fewer designer weapons."

Or consider her August 21 column about a meeting of top officials at Bush's ranch. Her analysis here consists of breaking the world into two opposing camps: the "Whack-Iraq tribe" and the "Pesky Questions tribe." The former includes "Rummy, . . . W., Cheney, Condi, Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle." The latter includes "Mr. Powell, Brent Scowcroft and Wesley Clark." How subtle—only the ones she doesn't like get nicknames. The reason that the "Whack-Iraq'ers" are so "gung-ho" is that "the Cheney-Rummy-Condi Axis of Anti-Evil believes in unilateralism so fervently." It's just a character trait, see? They must have a multilateral fiber deficiency.

In any case, it can't be because they think that Iraq poses a serious and immediate threat. We know that, because in her column on the opposing camps in the Iraq debate, Dowd doesn't see fit actually to discuss Iraq at all. What bearing could *that* have on the debate? Likewise, in the "alpha girls" column, Dowd never considers that there could be sound reasons of state for snubbing Germany—for instance, a "forgive and forget" policy might encourage politicians in other countries to pander to crude anti-Americanism, a pandering that would have the effect of reinforcing and strengthening the sentiment among the general population. But let no such considerations emerge from Dowd's pen: The First Law forbids them.

**The Second Immutable Law of Dowd*: It's easier to

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whine than to take a stand or offer solutions. Consider this: In her many columns to date lobbing stinkbombs at the "Whack-Iraq'ers," she has yet to come out and say that she opposes war in Iraq. The reason, presumably, is that she would then have to actually confront and argue against the administration's reasons for attacking Iraq. Instead, she offers this commentary on Bush's U.N. address (from her September 15 column): "But there was no compelling new evidence. Mr. Bush offered only an unusually comprehensive version of the usual laundry list. Saddam is violating the sanctions, he tried to assassinate Poppy, he's late on his mortgage payments, he tips 10 percent, he has an unjustifiable fondness for 'My Way,' he gassed his own people, he doesn't turn down the front brim of his hat."

When confronted with a passage like that, it's hard to know where to begin, but we must be brave. First, notice how she trivializes not only Saddam's violation of U.N. sanctions but even the massacre at Halabja, by including them on "the usual laundry list" along with a joke about being a stingy tipper. Second, notice how she leaves out a few of the more important "laundry list" items—like the fact that Saddam continues to stockpile and build weapons of mass destruction and the fact that he funds terrorism. Finally, observe that she tells us there is "no compelling new evidence" without telling us why the old evidence—"the usual laundry list"—is insufficient. To do that would require considering policy arguments and offering alternative ways to combat Saddam's litany of abuses. Into such territory, Dowd is loath to stray.

Maureen Dowd

And she did almost exactly the same thing during the Afghanistan campaign. On October 28, 2001, she asked "Are we quagmiring ourselves again?" Of course, she didn't offer an answer or any suggestions as to how to get out of a quagmire, if, indeed, we were in one. A week later, on the strength of a single misstep (the murder of CIA-friendly Abdul Haq), she wrote, "We're sophisticated; they're crude. We're millennial; they're medieval. We ride B-52's; they ride horses. And yet they're outmaneuvering us." No doubt spurred into action by Dowd's prod, American-backed forces captured Mazar-i-Sharif five days later, and Kabul fell four days after that. Just over a month after Dowd informed us that we were being outmaneuvered, the Taliban's last stronghold, Kandahar, fell.

**The Third Immutable Law of Dowd*: It is better to be cute than coherent. Along these lines, Dowd's favorite rhetorical device is parallelism. For example, from her June 12 column: "The Islamic enemy strums on our nerves to hurt our economy and get power. The American president strums on our nerves to help his popularity and retain power." And from August 18: "[Bush Sr.]'s proudest legacy, after all, was painstakingly stitching together a global coalition to stand up for the principle that one country cannot simply invade another without provocation. Now the son may blow off the coalition so he can invade another country without provocation." Her phrasing is so cute that the outrageous moral equivalence she's drawing almost slips by unnoticed: *She just compared the president of the United States to the September 11 terrorists and to Saddam Hussein.*

Of course, the parallels are total nonsense. The administration's terror warnings to the public (the subject of the first quote) may not have been handled perfectly, but their goal is hardly to terrorize the American public. Officials have to walk a fine line between scaring people too much and too often and not telling them enough (Dowd has repeatedly criticized the administration for withholding information). And Bush's desire to attack Iraq is hardly "without provocation": Baghdad is in violation of U.N. sanctions; Iraq takes regular shots at U.S. and British planes patrolling the no-fly zones; and there was the little matter of attempting to assassinate a former U.S. president. And that's not to mention the justifications on preemptive and humanitarian grounds.

Illustration by Drew Friedman

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But the worst example of Dowd's favoring cuteness over coherence comes from her August 21 column (yes, the same one featured under the First Law—it was quite a column). "We used to worry about a military coup against civilian authority," she wrote. "Now we worry about a civilian coup against military authority." Now, of course, Dowd is just being cute. Presumably she knows that civilian control over the military is one of the necessary conditions for democratic government, a condition that makes the very concept of a civilian coup against military authority incoherent. But she's using this bit of cuteness to make a point every bit as nonsensical as a literal reading of it. She's trying to argue that because several current and former military officers are distinctly less hawkish than some of the civilian leadership . . . well, it's not quite clear what, since she doesn't tell us where she stands on the issue (see the Second Law, above). But she thinks it ought to give us pause. She writes that Bush "signaled his civilian coup" by telling an AP reporter that he was reading Eliot Cohen's *Supreme Command*. She gives a one-line summary of the book (it "attacks the Powell Doctrine and argues that civilian leaders should not defer to 'the fundamental caution' of whiny generals on grand strategy or use of force"), and then drops the matter. Actually addressing Cohen's point, it seems, would require too many words—words that wouldn't be nearly as cute as "Whack-Iraq'ers."

**The Fourth Immutable Law of Dowd*: The particulars of my consumer-driven, self-involved life are of universal interest and reveal universal truths. Nowhere was this law more clearly illustrated than in Dowd's reaction to last fall's anthrax attacks. On October 17, 2001, for example, she opened her column with the line, "I am typing this wearing long black leather gloves." Dowd went on to explain that she had been wearing latex gloves, but she "felt the need for a more stylish sort of sterility" (a Dowd-like commentator might note ungenerously that this line describes her writing almost perfectly).

But for Dowd, fashion isn't just a barrier against germs—it's also her little way of fighting al Qaeda. So, she tells us on October 10, 2001: "I decide to defy the foul men who hate women. I wear high heels to church." The truth is, though, that what really scares her about the anthrax attacks is that the terrorists had the temerity to attack *journalists*! Again, from the October 17, 2001, column: "Has the creep from Al Qaeda been living in the eighth century so long he hasn't heard about not killing the messenger?" Terrorism is bad enough, but now *it's personal*.

Finally, on October 21, 2001, she broke down and confessed: "I'm a spoiled yuppie who desperately wants to go back to a time before we'd heard of microns and milling, aerosolization and clumps in the alveoli." And, of course, her wants, her fears, and her sense of style are just what we read the *Times* op-ed page to learn about.

**The Fifth Immutable Law of Dowd*: Europeans are always right. Whenever Dowd quotes a Continental, she allows the quote to stand on its own, as if it were, by virtue of the very Europeanness of its speaker, self-evidently true. Thus, on May 26, 2002, in the midst of President Bush's tour through Europe, she reported that "some Europeans sneered that 'Bully Bush' had turned into something even more irritating: a missionary." Three days later, she reported that "Parisians were indifferent to the president's arrival, and a few gave his motorcade the intercontinental finger of disapproval, as had some Berliners." Of course, the only European she seems actually to have spoken with is a French journalist at the Bush-Chirac press conference, who told her "with a grimace" that "Bush is so . . . Texan."

Fortunately, Dowd doesn't actually need to speak to people, because, as we learn in the same column, she can read the little cartoon thought bubbles that appear over their heads. While Bush is speaking, Chirac's thought bubble apparently reads, "Quel hick."

More recently, in a September 18, 2002, column that also exhibited classic Third Law behavior, Dowd wrote of the European desire to "contain the wild man, the leader with the messianic and relentless glint who is scaring the world"—President Bush, of course. Europeans "now act more nervous about the cowboy in the Oval Office who likes to brag on America as 'the greatest nation on the face of the Earth' than the thug in the Baghdad bunker." Not a word on how patently absurd it is to compare the democratically elected president of the United States to a mass-murdering, terrorist-sponsoring, anti-Semitic, expansionist despot. If the Europeans think that Bush is a missionary, a cowboy, a menace, and a hick, then he must be. And if the Europeans don't think Saddam poses a threat—then what are we so worried about?

Occasionally Dowd still turns out a good piece. Her June 5, 2002, column on squabbling between the CIA and the FBI worked well, because it was a petty, personality-based issue, thus lending itself to a petty, personality-based treatment. But the Clinton administration is ancient history; *most* issues can no longer appropriately be viewed through this prism. Any yet Maureen Dowd keeps plugging away with the same old formula. The Immutable Laws prove . . . well, immutable.

If you don't believe me, hang on to this article. And the next time you read a Dowd column, read it by the numbers. ♦

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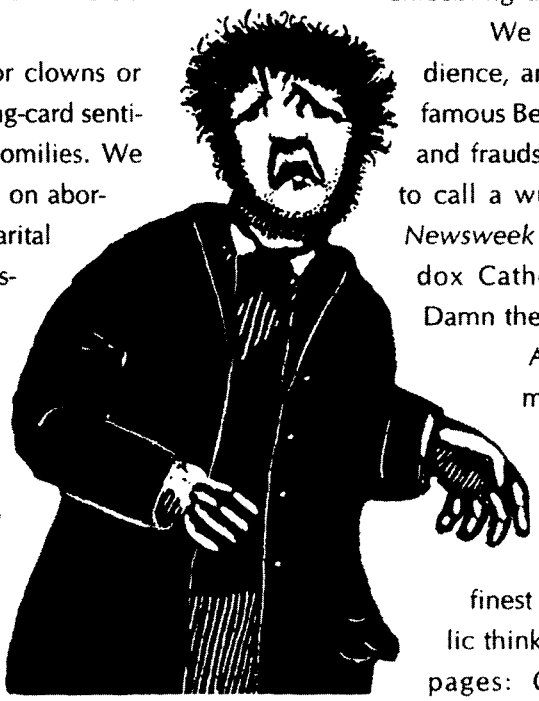
Why Are Catholics Such Wimps?

The Vatican thunders against abortion, same-sex "marriage," priestesses, assisted suicide, illicit sex, consumerism, smutty sex education, defective theology, and more. But walk into your average parish. *Where's the beef?*

All we get are *crumbs*: balloons or clowns or liturgical dancers or banners with greeting-card sentiments, but always vacuous feel-good homilies. We don't hear about the Church's teachings on abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, pre-marital sex, pornography, birth control, the indissolubility of marriage, Hell, etc. Why not? "Too controversial," whines the cowardly pastor. Pop psychology and Political Correctness are all the go. Shack-ups and homosexual partnerships are considered morally equivalent to Holy Matrimony, for Father Fluff doesn't refer to husbands and wives as husbands and wives anymore — now he calls them "partners," just like people in immoral unions, lest those living in sin feel "marginalized" or, well, sinful. Indeed, sin and repentance are passé, prompting one to wonder why Christ bothered to get crucified.



Wimpy clerics are keeping the full Catholic message from us. We're being robbed of our history, doctrine, moral resources, and intellectual heritage. No wonder many Catholics, who don't have a clue as to what Catholicism stands for, fall for anything our decadent culture entices them with! Especially our youth!

How long are clerics going to bow down before the strange gods of an alien culture? We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a monthly magazine edited by orthodox lay Catholics, say to the double-dealing men (men?) of the cloth: "Stop cheating and enfeebling the laity!"

We have an international audience, and we're published in infamous Berkeley, so we've seen fads and frauds galore. We aren't afraid to call a wuss a wimp. No wonder *Newsweek* calls us "cheeky." Orthodox Catholics in Berkeley? Yes! Damn the torpedoes!

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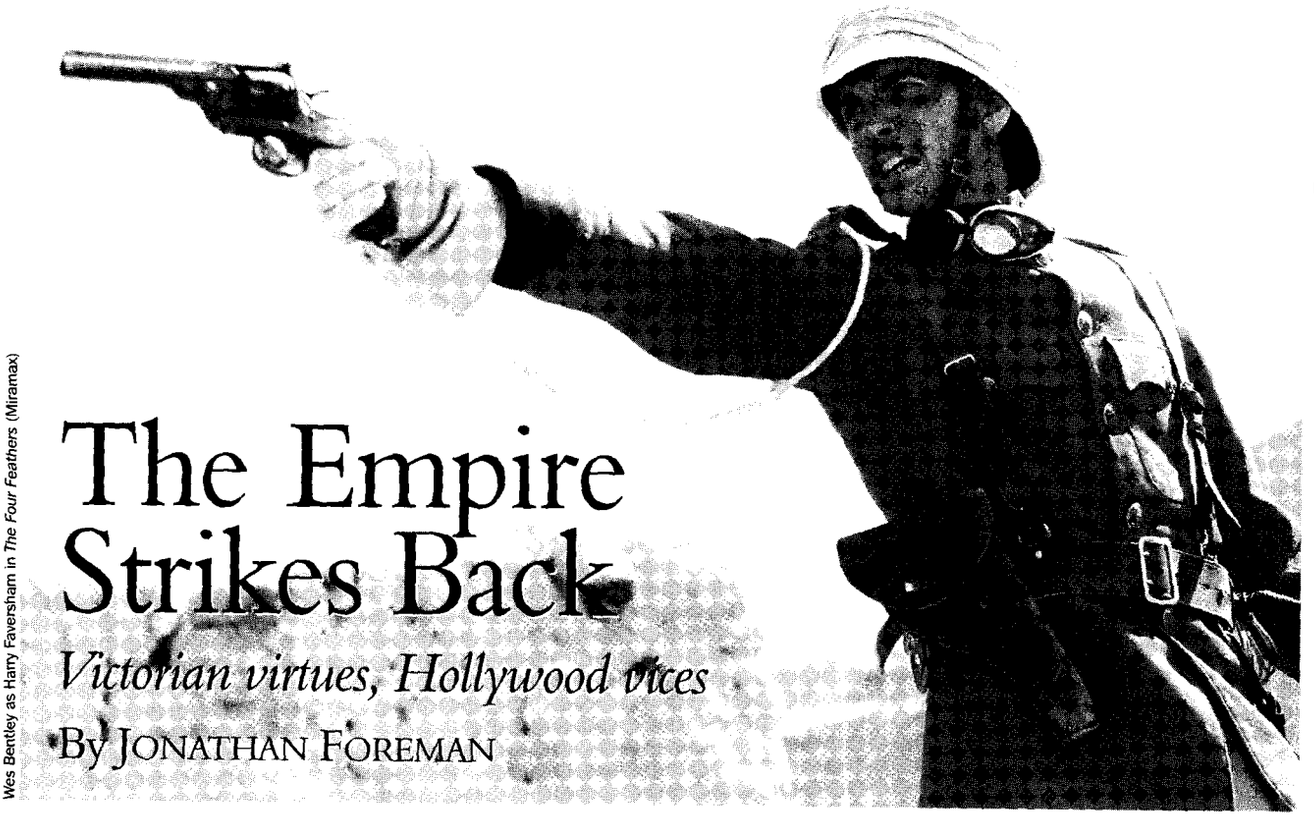

Wes Bentley as Harry Faversham in *The Four Feathers* (Miramax)

The Empire Strikes Back

Victorian virtues, Hollywood vices

By JONATHAN FOREMAN

Both the new movie *The Four Feathers* and the reaction to it exemplify contemporary attitudes to Anglo-Saxon imperialism and the Victorians who practiced it. The film itself—the sixth cinematic version of the A.E.W. Mason novel first published in 1902—is a failure as motion-picture entertainment: visually stunning but dramatically weak and thematically confused. Its failure suggests that the British imperial epic is one genre that cannot be successfully resuscitated as *Gladiator* did the sword-and-sandal flick. Anti-imperialism seems now to be too deeply embedded in our culture, and the Victorians seem at least as foreign to us (especially in their concern with things like honor and the judgments of Society) as the fierce non-Western peoples they fought.

Both the best and the worst things about this remake of *The Four Feathers* have much to do with its director, Shekhar Kapur—an Indian whose last film, the enjoyably lurid *Elizabeth*, displayed a sense of dynasty and of the importance of religious difference that is hard to imagine in an American director. His beautifully shot battle scenes in *The Four Feathers*, however, impose a kind of Leninist gloss on the Sudanese wars, with a cunning guerrilla peasantry teaching a terrible lesson to arrogant imperialist regulars, whose prized notions of masculine self-control and patriotism are revealed by defeat to be a great lie.

This is absurd historically—and, far worse, it wrecks the story.

The British fought two wars in the Sudan, from 1884 to 1885 and from 1897 to 1898. This film seems at least at times to be set during the first one, although the novel and all the previous movie versions were set during the second war, in which the Sudan was conquered by an Anglo-Egyptian army led by General Horatio Herbert Kitchener.

The Sudan was not considered a part of the British Empire in 1884. It was a rebellious province of Egypt, itself a nominal department of the collapsing Ottoman Empire, but in fact a state that had fallen under informal British control. Neither a colony nor an official protectorate, it continued to be nominally ruled by a khedive until after the Second World War.

Under the influence of the British, the Egyptian government had attempted to suppress the slave trade in the Sudan. This, in 1881, fueled a fundamentalist rebellion led by a messianic holy man who styled himself the Mahdi. After the Mahdi smashed an Egyptian army commanded by a Colonel Hicks in 1883 (capturing, among other things, its modern Remington rifles), the British decided that further attempts to contain the Mahdist revolt would be a waste of men and money. They ordered the evacuation of all Egyptian garrisons from the Sudan.

This was overseen by General Charles "Chinese" Gordon, the British general appointed governor general of the Sudan by the khedive despite London's objections. Gordon, who was devoted to the Sudanese and the anti-slavery cause, wanted British intervention in the Sudan and he refused to abandon Khartoum, which was then besieged by the Mahdi. Reluctantly, and after much delay, the British prime minister Gladstone sent an expedition to relieve Gordon, who

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was protected only by an unreliable Sudanese and Egyptian garrison.

Though the film presents this expedition as an exercise intended "to restore the dignity of our empire," its aims were much more limited. And although the film shows the resulting war as a military catastrophe, the facts are otherwise. The combined Anglo-Egyptian relief force fought several fierce battles with the "dervish" enemy, before arriving at Khartoum just too late to rescue Gordon.

Gordon's death damaged Gladstone's government and the careers of the soldiers who took too long to reach Khartoum. But calls for vengeance soon dissipated. And it wasn't until a decade had passed, and the Mahdi had died and been succeeded by a new despot, the Khalifa, that anyone seriously considered undertaking another expedition.

Shekhar Kapur's movie begins marvelously with a vigorously filmed, rather brutal game of rugby. Here are young men being prepared for war through sport. Not cricket, mind you, with its chivalrous rules and rituals so redolent of a settled, leisured society—but rugby: a thuggish game invented by and for gentlemen who will one day face the challenge of ruling an unruly world. In the novel one of the characters refers ruefully to female admiration for "brute courage" in men, and Kapur has the women watching from the side display an almost visceral pleasure in the sight of their menfolk struggling in the mud.

It is a sequence that suggests that an ideology fetishizing physical toughness, teamwork, camaraderie, and courage really did play an important role in the ability of a small island people to conquer so much of the globe. It is also the last accurate, insightful, or, more important, honest sequence in the movie.

Worse, the film treks to extreme dullness. It's some achievement to take the excitement and emotion out of a story that has delighted readers and movie audiences so often and for so long. Especially when you have going for you spectacular Moroccan locations (far more dramatic than the genuine Sudanese locations used in the 1939 version) and Shekhar Kapur's amazing eye for landscape and color.

The filmmakers' final product says little of the human drama of the novel, a work primarily interested in fathers and sons and blindness, both physical and emotional. It is also too ambivalent about courage, honor, and the spectacle of Europeans' defeating people of color to take pleasure in high adventure.

It doesn't help that the strain of speaking in English accents seems to drain stars Heath Ledger and Wes Bentley of their acting abilities. Still, it may not be the actors' fault that all the male British characters speak and move with a robotic stiffness (as if the filmmakers drew their sense of Victorian England from Monty Python skits). The same characters in the 1939 version—a film made by people who had known real Victorians—are full of life and emotion by comparison.

Chinese Gordon

Hulton / Archive

You might expect modern filmmakers to be uncomfortable with honor and duty, but these modern filmmakers seem just as uneasy with love and loyalty and romantic rivalry. They don't know how to deal with the act that precipitates the action in *The Four Feathers*: the resignation of Harry Faversham from the army on the eve of its departure to war in the Sudan. It's this that prompts three of his best friends and his fiancée to hand him white feathers—symbols of cowardice—and provokes him to go to the Sudan, disguise himself as an Arab, and redeem himself with acts of heroism.

In the trailers for Kapur's version there's a line about his not wanting to take part in an immoral war. This has been excised from the final cut, apparently because the producers were afraid the public would draw some kind of upsetting parallel with the contemporary preparations for a war in Iraq. In the book and the previous movie versions, Harry resigns out of real *fear*: not fear of death or injury, but fear of being afraid. The clever, sensitive son of a bullying, unimaginative general, Harry has been the target of too many admonitory stories about men who went yellow under fire. And he is convinced he would do the same and therefore bring disgrace upon his family, his fiancée, his friends, and his regiment.

Interestingly, in the 1939 version—usually accused of being the most hopelessly propagandistic about the empire—Harry expresses strong doubts about the war: "the futility of this idiotic Egyptian adventure, the madness of it all." And there were indeed lots of people in the 1880s and 1890s who felt the same way, the Victorian political class being rather less conformist than Kapur and his colleagues seem to imagine. But now Harry's motivation for resignation remains a mystery, perhaps because the real goal of the film is to "deconstruct" the myths that informed its predecessors. In a confused, halfhearted way, it's an anti-imperialist imperial epic.

Ironically, this has been missed by most critics. Several have complained that the film isn't anti-imperialist enough. Thus, the *Washington Post*'s Stephen Hunter wrote, "Go get skewered in the midday sun so Queen Vicky can add a few more quid to her Barclays account? [Faversham] would prefer not to." The sub-Marxist idea that the Sudanese wars were part of

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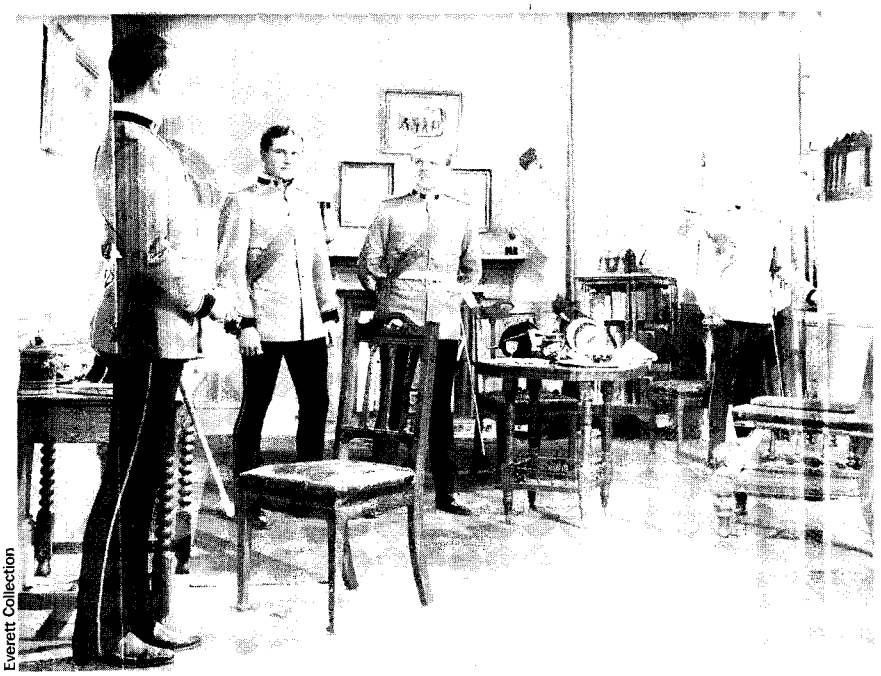

Everett Collection

Ralph Richardson, by the window, raises a toast in the 1939 version of The Four Feathers.

some squalid grab for exploitable natural resources is laughable. The Sudan in the late nineteenth century had no resources for the taking—except the black slaves being traded by the very people the British were fighting. Roger Ebert felt the same way, saying that the movie was more enjoyable the less you knew about the real British Empire (he's right, but for the wrong reasons).

Yet for all their apparent dislike of imperial culture, Kapur and his team are far too intelligent to make the ignorant assumptions that crept into so many reviews. Instead, in an effort to make the Sudanese into standard-issue victims of bad white folk, the film suppresses the race war that was already under way in the Sudan before intervention by Anglo-Egyptian forces. In the 1880s and 1890s—as today—Muslim Arab tribes in the north were brutalizing Christian and animist black tribes in the south. It also chooses to forget the fact that the Mahdi's and then the Khalifa's Sudanese were rebelling against Egyptian overlordship that long predated Britain's very recent dominion over Egypt.

The British-led effort to halt the Sudanese slave trade, like the suppression of suttee (widow burning) and thuggee (the ritual murder of travelers) in India, may have been culturally insensitive. But such things were an inevitable result of the moral enthusiasms that played such an important role in British imperialism (though not Belgian, Spanish, French, Dutch, or German imperialisms). It was the desire to end the depredations of slavers that sent sailors of the Royal Navy to die of malaria in the Bight of Benin, and Gordon to die in Khartoum.

The sad thing is that the kind of dishonesty that removes issues of slavery and indigenous racial conflict also covers up a historical reality that is far more interesting than the one depicted in *The Four Feathers*. Sudanese black troops, anxious to avenge their enslaved brethren, were among the most effective troops marshaled by the British, certainly superior to the Egyptians who formed the vast majority of a force that included large numbers of Indian soldiers, volunteers from Australia, Canadian voyageurs (who manned whale boats used to bring troops up the Nile cataracts), and even some Americans.

Yet there are times when Kapur seems to be undercutting his own instinct to make this a revisionist retelling. For instance, there is a scene in which a shocked Faversham stops a French whoremaster from brutalizing a beautiful slave girl. Later, when Faversham behaves like a broken man, pathetically begging his jailer for food, it's implied that he's only doing so to save the life of a desperate comrade.

Kapur also seems to be seduced by the pageantry of the Victorian British army. His camera adores the gorgeous scarlet uniforms (though in real life khaki was generally worn in the Sudan campaigns), the rituals of the ballroom and regimental dining hall, and the camaraderie as much as it does the barren beauty of the desert locations.

Presumably it is this visual fascination that so enrages those who see the film as excessively apologist about the British Empire. In the production notes for the film, screenwriter Hossein Amini, whose script for *The Wings of the Dove* would make you expect better, is quoted as saying: "Imperial England was confronting a world and society about which it knew very little. These young men went from fantastic country mansions into the middle of the desert, and in the end their overconfidence and belief in their superiority led to mistakes and ultimately to disaster."

Everything about this is wrong. The British didn't suffer any military disasters in the Sudan. They won—and with so few casualties on their side, and with so many on the other, that it actually sickened the more sensitive among them. There's something mad about the notion that late-Victorian British officers were braying, ignorant naifs whose illusions about warfare and their capacity for self-command would be smashed by war in a distant desert. These people had fought fierce tribespeople in mountains, deserts, and jungles all over the world for more than a hundred years. Yet Kapur takes a delight in showing the disintegration of British soldiery under the shock of combat—leaving unanswered the question of how small handfuls of these men managed to conquer so much of the globe. While you can lay many charges at their feet, cowardice or a lack of sang-froid was not one of them.

Kapur also has dervishes popping out of holes in the ground like enraged, sword-waving ground squirrels. In another sequence the dervishes put on the uniforms of killed or captured British soldiers, deceive their enemy, and therefore wipe out a British square. It's a fantasy of the Sudanese as the Vietnamese on their best day. In truth,

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the main trick to defeating Sudanese rebels was to bring enough water. Some of the battles fought on the way to relieve Gordon were ferocious. In two of them British squares were briefly broken, giving inspiration to some of the best known imperial poetry and prompting the British to accord the Sudanese dervishes great respect—even though in both cases, Tamai and Abu Klea, the squares were reformed, the enemy who'd broken into them dispatched, and the attacks on them repulsed.

In the film, on the other hand, one of the officers panics and calls a retreat (though in a surrounded square there is nowhere to retreat to) and the square is completely wiped out. It's interesting that the much less impressive real-life achievement by the dervishes seems to have made an enormous impression on the British.

See for example Kipling's "Fuzzy Wuzzy" (referring to the Haddendawa tribe that fought at Tamai): *We sloshed you with Martinis, an it wasn't 'ardly fair; / But for all the odds agin you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you broke the square . . . / So 'eres to you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Soudan; / You're a poor benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man.*

Since the British meted out preferential treatment to the "martial peoples" of the empire (most of them Muslim), this really counted. The same battles were also the inspiration for the most famous piece of Victorian doggerel, Sir Henry Newbolt's *Vitae Lampada*:

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;—
The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up! Play up! And play the game!"

Even this reveals a sense of war more realistic than the one Kapur allows his callow subalterns (though it shows how smart Kapur was to start the film off on the playing field). It is ironic that Victorians like Kipling could also be rather better at demystifying the imperial military mystique than contemporary anti-imperialists like Kapur himself seem to be: *A scrimmage in a Border Station / A clatter down a steep defile / Two thousand pounds of education / Drop to a ten-rupee jezail.*

Of course, the Victorians were much more complicated and interesting people than they are given credit for being. And though capable of great self-deception especially on matters of race, they often had an accurate sense of their own qualities and limitations, especially those that seem so alien today. They prized self-command because they knew the extraordinary things it made possible.

In 1852, a British troopship, the paddlewheeled *Birkenhead*, hit a rock off Capetown. There wasn't time to evacuate everyone onto the lifeboats. So as the women and children were lowered to safety, the troops and their officers stood, mustered on the deck. Not a single man broke ranks. And they were still standing as the ship broke and sank.

As Kipling wrote, *To stand and be still / To the Birkenhead drill / Is a damn' tough bullet to chew.*

What made such deeds possible was the combination of a sense of duty and a rigid social hierarchy (at least by American standards). What the Victorians had and we can hardly imagine are the resulting pressures of society. They lived in a world in which mere physical cowardice, let alone exposure as a liar or fraudster, could earn a man permanent expulsion from desirable social circles.

It is a sad irony of history that the Victorian *Romanitas*—the sense of duty and hierarchy, the discipline and paternalism that formed the backbone of the British military culture—ensured the doctrinal rigidity that cost so many British lives in both world wars. Nonetheless, it is a mistake to look at the Victorian men fictionalized in *The Four Feathers* through the Edwardian lens of Bloomsbury and Lytton Strachey's mockery.

High Victorian culture could be rigid in its obsession with self-control and even cruel. But its optimism, discipline, and sense of duty made it very good at certain things. And their own pre-industrial code of a gentleman's honor gave Victorians an advantage when it came to dealing with other honor cultures—honor cultures similar to those that inform Osama bin Laden and other Arab enemies of the West. If America is to take up an imperial role in the world today, we have only the Victorian British from whom to learn how to do it. ♦

The Church in Crisis

George Weigel explains it all.

BY JUSTIN TORRES

For now, at least, the media seem to consider that the June meeting of America's Catholic bishops in Dallas largely brought the priestly abuse scandals to a close—which, for the bishops, was more than fine: The whole point of Dallas was to take the fire out of the story. Save for a few pieces—such as the *New York Times*'s lamenting the effects of a zero-tolerance policy it had vigorously advocated—the press has moved on.

But inside American Catholicism, the crisis remains alive. The abuse scandals were a long time coming, and neither the causes nor the effects were settled at Dallas. George Weigel's *The Courage to Be Catholic* is the first attempt to make sense of it all. Weigel is hardly a prophet crying in the

Justin Torres is a writer and editor in Washington, D.C.

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wilderness. One of the best-connected lay Catholics around, he is a prolific author—his credits include the authoritative biography of Pope John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*—newspaper columnist, and theologian. Weigel probably knows more about the mysterious workings of the worldwide Church than any other American. Back home, his wide network of associates includes leading American bishops and cardinals.

Yet Weigel is not afraid, in *The Courage to Be Catholic*, to harrow the American episcopate. He draws together the strands of the crisis of 2002—lack of leadership, a fetish for secrecy, continued indulgence of dissent from Catholic moral teaching, and the homosexualization of the priesthood—and assigns considerable blame for them to the American bishops. The "grave failures of too many bishops," he writes, turned a correctable problem of clergy sexual abuse into a full-blown crisis that has seriously damaged the Catholic church's moral standing in American society.

Long-festering sexual misconduct and theological laxity in seminaries under the bishops' control exploded into the crisis of this year. The problem was compounded by naive bishops who transferred priests from diocese to diocese, assured by psychologists—many of whom had little respect for Catholic teaching on sexual morality—that they were cured. A culture of "loyal dissent" that, in the end, proved not to be all that loyal, was indulged by bishops who preferred to keep all sides "in the conversation" rather than take definitive action. And once the scandal erupted, too many bishops, shackled by what Weigel calls the "iron cage" of diocesan bureaucracies, retreated behind their (often grossly incompetent) lawyers and spoke in contemporary therapeutic language rather than the "bracing, demanding language of the Gospel of sin, penance, and redemption."

The most engrossing portion of the book is Weigel's chapter on Rome's response, which includes previously unknown information. For quite some time, as the media uncovered instance after instance of abuse, the Vatican remained unresponsive, to the irritation of Americans accustomed to instant comment from their leaders. But the Vatican is different—cautious, secretive, and unmoved by media frenzy. Moreover, what seemed like a whirlwind in the United States was barely a whisper in Europe. The scandals were little noted in the Italian and European papers read by the curia.

The turn, Weigel writes, came on April 9, when several American bishops, including U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops president Wilton Gregory, had lunch with the pope and impressed upon him and other officials the severity of the crisis. Boston's Bernard Cardinal Law made a trip to Rome on April 13 to discuss the crisis, and on April 22-25, a major meeting took place with high Vatican officials and several American cardinals. Out of it came a six-point personnel policy draft, with the Vatican promising an expedited review after adoption at the bishops' meeting.

Courtesy: the Ethics & Public Policy Center.

The Courage to Be Catholic
Crisis, Reform, and the Future of the Church
by George Weigel
Basic. 208 pp., $22

For an ancient institution that prides itself on deliberate proceedings, this was a remarkably quick response—but the attempt to communicate it was a disaster. Canonical lawyers had insisted on using the word "notorious," which has a specific canonical meaning: Sins that are known only to perpetrator and victim are "occult," or hidden, while those that are known publicly are "notorious." But this was easily missed by the public, which concluded that the Church would remove abusive priests only once their cover was blown. The press conference was worse yet. It started two hours late and a number of cardinals didn't attend. There was no opening statement by Gregory, which made it impossible to shape a clear storyline about what had been accomplished. After forty-five minutes of questions, says Weigel, "no one watching on television had any idea of what the cardinals had agreed to."

As for the crisis itself, Weigel's analysis of what it is (a crisis of fidelity, demanding in response greater fidelity from everyone) and what it is not (a pedophilia scandal or a cause for liberal reforms such as married or women priests), seems definitive. He doesn't dwell on the clear connection between abuse and the presence of homosexuals in the priesthood, but simply notes the obvious: that the majority of cases involved abuse of boys or young men by homosexual priests.

In fact, drawing on settled Catholic teaching, he strikes a nuanced distinction between priests with a homosexual orientation who nonetheless commit themselves to chastity and fidelity, and gay priests who place their urges at the center of their being. This distinction will likely win him no fans from either extreme of the vicious debate on this issue: those who loudly deny clear evidence of the centrality of homosexual sexual abuse to this crisis, and those ready to drive out *any* homosexual priest.

But Weigel is at his best when he describes the many connections between the crisis of 2002 and the old culture of Catholic dissent, born in the 1960s and 1970s. To be sure, dissent did

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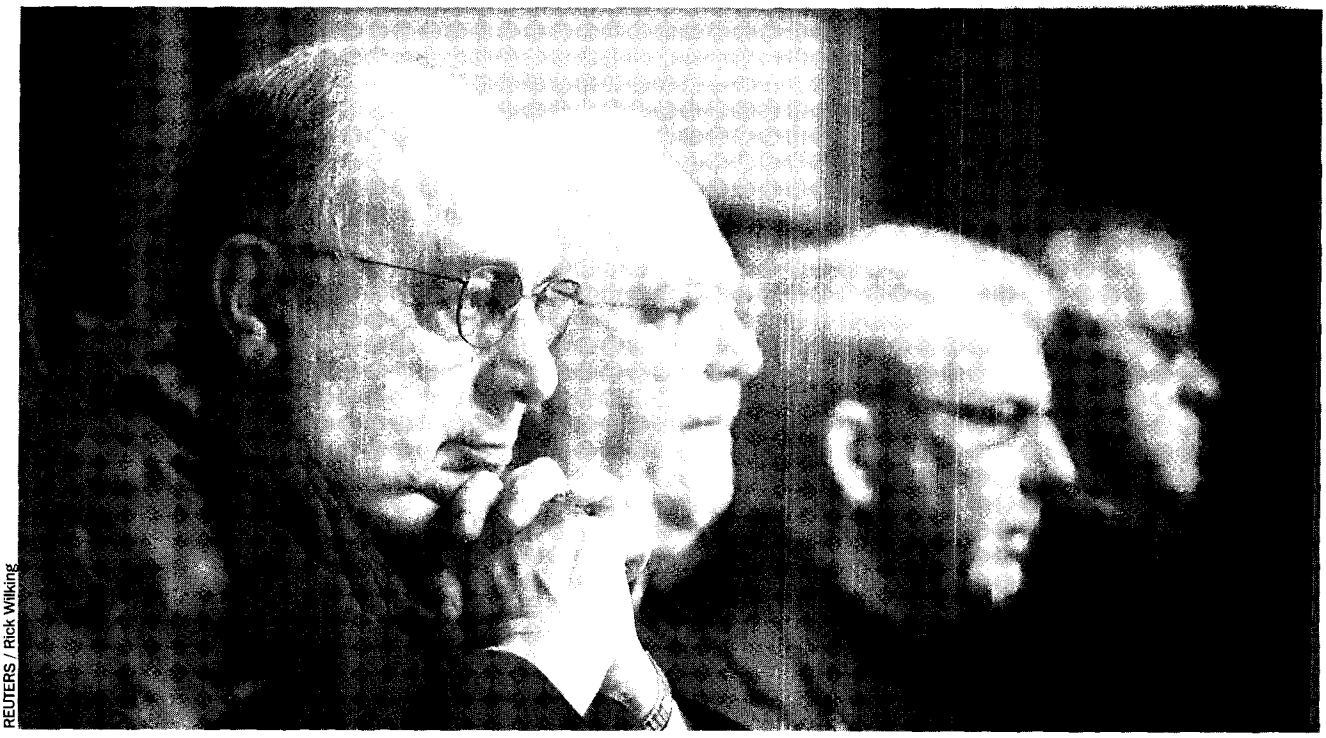

REUTERS / Rick Wilking

The American bishops meeting in Dallas, June 14, 2002.

not cause the abuse; sexual predators, unchecked by fearful bishops, did. But the culture of dissent and its leading lights—the media-darling theologians and activist nuns who work ceaselessly to rescue the Church from its authoritarian roots—helped to drive deep divisions into American Catholicism and into the hearts and minds of individual Catholics, including priests. And it is these internal divisions we have had to watch playing themselves out in public this year.

Weigel points to the "truce of 1968" as a key turning point, when bishops were cowed into tolerating open dissent from settled Catholic teaching. That year, nineteen priests in the archdiocese of Washington, D.C., were disciplined by Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle after publicly declaring their dissent from *Humanae Vitae*, the papal encyclical that reiterated the Church's prohibition on birth control. Pope Paul VI—whose uncertain leadership in the 1960s and 1970s is partially to blame for thirty years of commotion—forced O'Boyle to back down, fearing a full-blown schism. Many of the priests returned to duty, several at Catholic University. Paul VI got his wish; there was no schism. But a pattern had been set, whereby dissenters knew that they usually would not be called to account by local bishops who feared Rome would not back them up.

Thus began what Weigel calls "the silly season" in American Catholicism. Priests (those who were left, anyway: an estimated 45,000 American priests left their ministry in the years after 1968) started wearing khakis and sweaters and began to function as glorified psychotherapists. Children in Catholic schools were taught to regard the Bible's miracle stories as pious fictions, and couldn't name a sacrament if their soul depended on it—which, after all, it does, if Catholicism is right. Parishes and diocesan chanceries were swarmed by bureaucrats whose every instinct was to soothe division and mediate conflict, usually at the expense of doctrinal orthodoxy. Catholic liturgy and music—under the watchful eye of liturgical directors who threw out the old hymnals as soon as possible—were quickly rendered insipid. "Let There Be Peace on Earth" haunts millions of Catholic school children to this day.

An enormous gulf opened up between Catholic teaching and Catholic practice at every level of the Church, from the laity to the bishops, especially on sexual matters. As Weigel notes, media perceptions to the contrary, most Catholics rarely hear a sermon on sexual morality—priests are loath to bring the matter up. And many bishops, facing a severe priest shortage, have been unwilling to delve into the sexual lives of their priests, or take back the seminaries from vocation directors (who frequently are not priests) and psychologists.

Weigel is clear: The bishops failed to act like *bishops*—like men with a grave moral responsibility for the souls of the priests who labor in their dioceses and the spiritual well-being of the flocks they guide. The crisis, he insists, is a crisis of fidelity, and he demands a return to fidelity from everyone in the Church, starting at the top. Bishops must reassert their authority over the spiritual life of their dioceses. It is not enough that the diocesan books be balanced or all the warring factions kept reasonably happy. Rather, bishops must take control of their seminaries and reinstill intellectual and spiritual rigor into the process of priestly formation.

Seminary reform has been under way in many dioceses for the past fifteen years; it is notable, actually, that few of the abuse cases dated after 1990—a clear sign that something had changed in the seminaries. But Weigel would have bishops go further, especially in the recruitment of future priests. Stunningly, a major weakness in the vetting of potential seminarians is an assessment of their faith life and religious beliefs. Many are subjected to a battery of psychological tests, but few are asked whether they pray regularly or are familiar with basic Church doctrine.

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Further, Weigel would have ordained priests continue their theological education, with regular sabbaticals for study—in a spirit of receptivity to Church tradition rather than knee-jerk suspicion, as is too often the case in seminaries and university theology departments today.

Especially welcome is Weigel's call for scraping off the layers of bureaucracy that have encrusted Catholic life at all levels. In parishes, the existence of numerous lay "ministers"—he notes ruefully how many parishes now have "ministers of hospitality," who used to be called "ushers"—has blurred the lines between the priest who acts as *alter Christus*, another Christ, and the laity.

This has led to a general confusion about the nature and role of the hierarchy in the Church. At the diocesan and national level, religious bureaucrats are often a font of doctrinal foolishness, frequently absorbing resources and blocking needed reforms. Especially as the crisis of 2002 unfolded, many bishops delegated the responsibility to proclaim the truth forthrightly to spokesmen and attorneys whose knowledge of, and devotion to, Catholic teaching was suspect.

Weigel would jettison these ecclesiastical hangers-on, and amen to that. But is his agenda realistic? Before the crisis, the answer would have been a resounding "no," but the past nine months have been so unsettling that everything is now on the table. *The Courage to Be Catholic* is the first shot in what will be a protracted war over the legacy of the crisis of 2002. Everyone understands that the crisis is a turning point in American Catholic life. The question is, a turning point on the road to where? ♦

Boucher's Mystery

The case of the curious critic.

BY JON L. BREEN

After producing seven detective novels between 1937 and 1942, Anthony Boucher quit writing books and started reviewing them.

The Anthony Boucher Chronicles
Reviews and Commentary 1942-1947
edited by Francis M. Nevins
Ramble House, 3 volumes, $21.95 each

The Sound of Detection
Ellery Queen's Adventures in Radio
by Francis M. Nevins and Martin Grams Jr.
OTR, 267 pp., $29.95

For all that the creative spirit is superior to the critical, Boucher made the right choice. As a mystery writer, he was skilled but derivative, heavily influenced by Ellery Queen, G.K. Chesterton, and John Dickson Carr. As a critic, he was unique. It's possible to imagine twentieth-century crime fiction without Boucher's novels but not without his critical writings.

Born William Anthony Parker White in California, Boucher was a man of many talents and enthusiasms. As a science-fiction writer and editor, he helped raise the level of a genre too often associated with pulp juvenilia. He was a prolific broadcaster and writer on opera in the San Francisco Bay Area—besides being a lay leader in the Roman Catholic Church and active in local politics. After his last novel was published, he continued to write short stories, translated foreign detective fiction for *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine* (including the first English-language appearance of Jorge Luis Borges), and co-wrote two of radio's best detective programs: the Basil Rathbone-Nigel Bruce Sherlock Holmes series and the Ellery Queen program. (The full story of the Queen program and Boucher's contribution is explained in *The Sound of Detection*, a recently published expansion and revision of a book that first appeared in 1983.)

When the United States entered World War II, Boucher, married with two sons and a chronic asthma sufferer, was not a candidate for military service. In 1942, he was hired to replace Edward D. Doyle, the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s mystery critic, who had gone to war. In 1951, he began writing the "Criminals at Large" column for the *New York Times* book-review section, a post he would hold until his death in 1968 at the age of fifty-seven.

Much as he loved formal fair-play detection, Boucher as a critic was no rigid traditionalist. He appreciated a wide range of types and styles, from spy thriller to psychological study to police procedural to hardboiled private-eye tales. At a time when they were mostly ignored by critics, he regularly reviewed original paperback novels, the format that produced some of the best work of such writers as Chester Himes, Jim Thompson, Richard Matheson, and John D. MacDonald, who credited Boucher with erasing "that unfair and arbitrary demarcation which labeled a whole area of work inferior because of the authors' choice of subject matter. He drew the line between good and bad regardless of genre." Vin Packer, a remarkable novelist Boucher compared to John O'Hara and Nancy Mitford, stated she began writing crime fiction solely because of Boucher's willingness to cover paperbacks.

Boucher was an early advocate of numerous writers who subsequently gained wide recognition. Lawrence Treat's 1945 pioneering novel *V as in Victim* he praised as "in its unpretentious way an epoch-making book, marking a fresh new realistic approach to police procedure." As early as 1951, he was celebrating Ross Macdonald for "his vivid realization of locale," "his

The winner of two Edgar awards, Jon L. Breen is the author of six mystery novels and writes the "Jury Box" column in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine.

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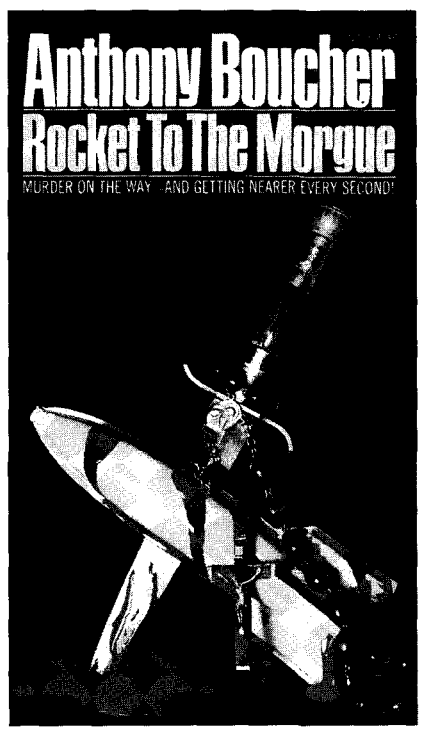
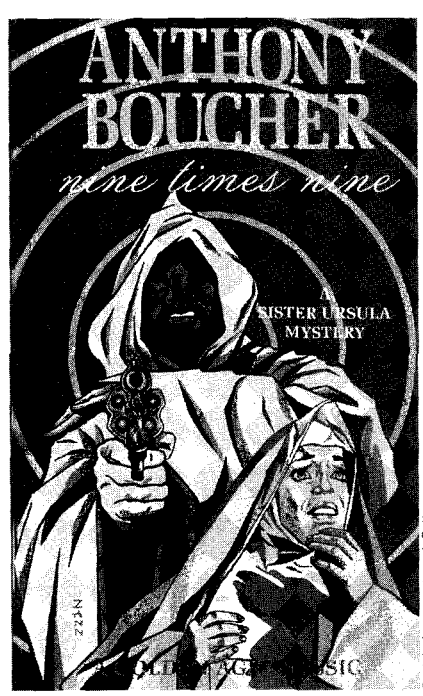
striking prose style, reminiscent of Chandler," "and above all . . . his strangely just attitude toward human beings." (It was his reference to Philip Marlowe's misanthropy in a review of *The Little Sister* that gained Boucher the misleading label of a detractor of Chandler, a writer for whom he nearly always had high praise.) When the first 87th Precinct novels of Ed McBain appeared as paperback originals in 1956, he touted them as the best American contributions to the growing procedural school. In 1967, he praised a young writer named Donald Westlake for his "tough, hard-nosed" novels, "with an acute insight into criminal thinking and an enviable ability to shock legitimately," and his later "criminous farce-comedies, as warm and funny as his early books were cold and frightening."

Boucher's solid grounding in general literature allowed him to raise the standards of the field he covered: While he scorned Mickey Spillane, he celebrated writers who brought greater skills to the same unpleasant subject matter. For all his exacting standards, he was a kind and measured critic and the writer's friend—often literally: Ross Macdonald credited Boucher with starting "my career as a private-detective story writer—a career which, like my wife's career, was sustained by Tony's friendship. It was his eye we wrote for, and his unfailingly human response that set the final period to each book."

Though not yet collected in book form, the *New York Times* columns are at least accessible on microfilm in most libraries. But his equally interesting reviews for the *Chronicle* were long unavailable, until their gathering in three new volumes, each introduced and annotated by Francis M. Nevins. Considering Boucher's importance to crime fiction, one would expect these lost works to find at least a university press or established reference-book publisher. Instead, we have three handsome but tiny dustjacketed paperbacks from a minor print-on-demand firm that specializes in the work of Harry Stephen Keeler, an eccentric mystery writer of the 1920s through 1940s who still has a small but enthusiastic following.

Boucher's *Chronicle* writings give an incidental picture of the concerns and preoccupations of the home front, specifically the effects of war on the book world. The first volume consists of chatty news-and-comment columns about crime and mystery fiction. The second reprints his capsule reviews of new titles, enjoyable reading even when they concern writers no one remembers. The third contains his reviews outside the mystery field—on rocketry, relativity, medieval drama, Shakespearean authorship, pyramidology, anti-Semitism, film criticism, ghost stories, stamp collecting, race relations, librarianship, theology, voice instruction, music, criminal psychology, and wartime cookery. One of his reviewing specialties was a genre peculiar to the time, the "Underground" novel. It was a sign of the times that the *Chronicle* editors thought enough of their readers to allow the multi-lingual Boucher to review books published in French or Spanish.





Book jackets courtesy: J. Bottum.

But what about Boucher's truncated career as writer of detective fiction? He arguably had the potential to become one of its greatest American practitioners. Two questions are inevitable: Why did he stop, and what might he have accomplished had he continued? *The Case of the Seven of Calvary* (1937), Boucher's first novel, has many features common to the Golden Age of Detection between the world wars: a list of characters, footnotes, a timetable, murder-scene diagrams, a you-have-all-the-clues challenge to the reader, a final gathering of the suspects, and Boucher's most audacious refinement: a list, provided before the solution, of the key clues needed for the reader to solve the puzzle, including the page numbers on which they appear. The solution is based on an already venerable alibi gimmick and reader misdirection, but Boucher uses the familiar elements ingeniously.

The Case of the Crumpled Knave (1939) introduces the character Boucher would return to most frequently, private detective Fergus O'Breen, a soft-boiled sleuth in the Ellery Queen mode. The plot, drawing on Boucher's fascination with card games, has a fresher and cleverer puzzle than *Seven of Calvary*, including a familiar feature of the Queen novels: the presentation of an ingenious and elaborate but false solution before the revelation of the real one.

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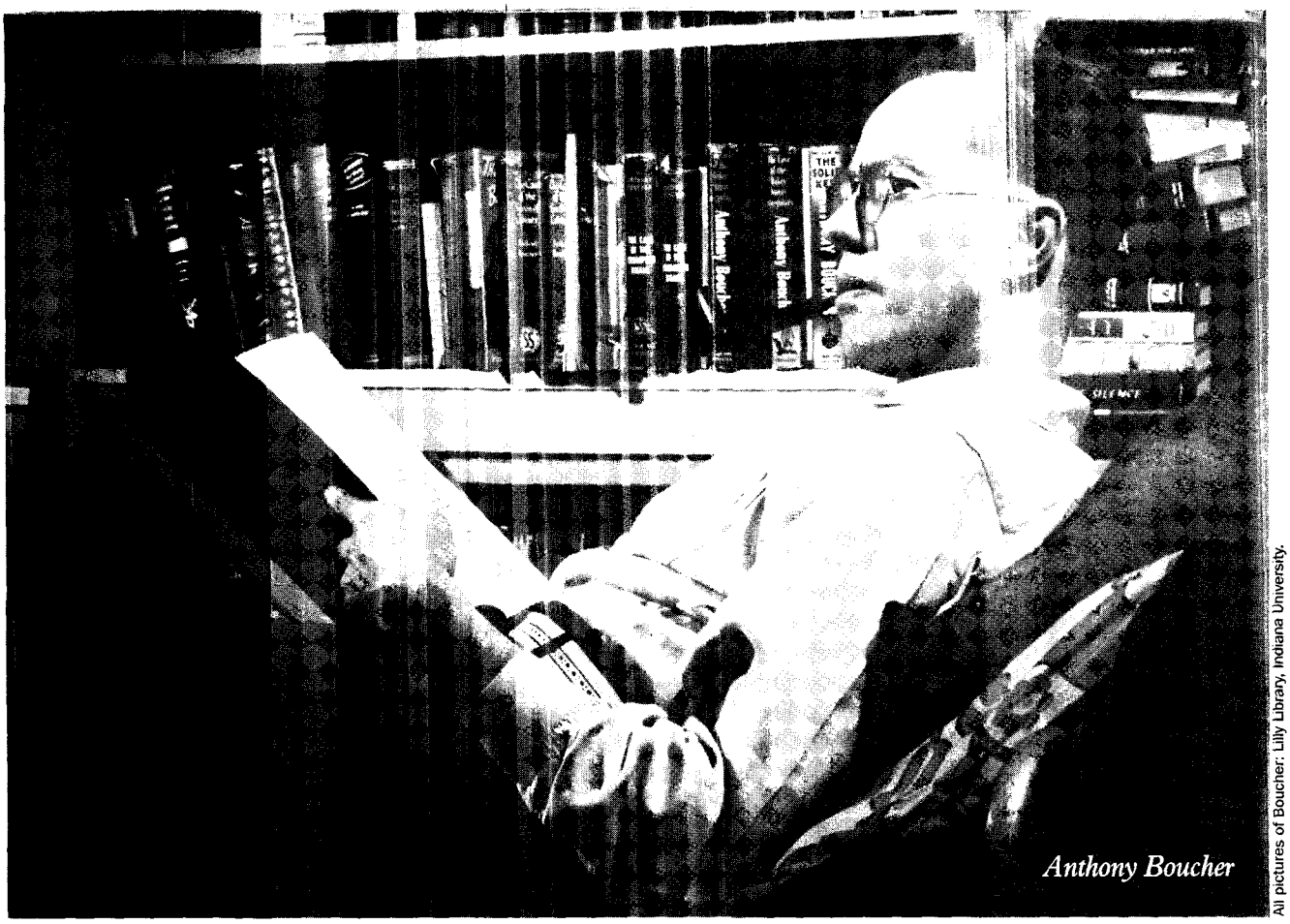

Anthony Boucher

All pictures of Boucher: Lilly Library, Indiana University.

Though Fergus doesn't appear in *The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars* (1940), his sister Maureen, a movie-studio publicist, is prominent. A tough-guy mystery writer, who has been wrongheadedly hired to adapt Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Speckled Band" for the screen, is murdered, with several scholars of Sherlock Holmes—acting as technical advisers for the film—as potential suspects and detectives. Numerous allusions to the Holmes canon and an espionage element appropriate to the period undergird another strong fair-play puzzle, including a question of who'll-solve-it as well as who-done-it.

Fergus returns in *The Case of the Solid Key* (1941), about the locked-room murder of a theatrical producer running a confidence scam on Hollywood hopefuls. Again, there is a Queenian double solution, including another fresh variation on an ancient device. *The Case of the Seven Sneezes* (1942) offers Boucher's most elaborate puzzle. In a situation similar to Agatha Christie's *And Then There Were None* (1940), the murders take place on an island among stranded guests. The novel has its annoyances and peculiarities: Fergus wards off the advances of a nymphomaniac by punching her in the jaw; the redhaired sleuth's inter-goddamn-polated oaths grow tiresome, and part of the plot (as Boucher ruefully admitted) is based on the *Lusitania* sailing in the wrong direction. Still, it remains an entertaining novel.

The two novels Boucher wrote as "H.H. Holmes," though better known than those under his own name, are inferior to his best work. *Nine Times Nine* (1940) and *Rocket to the Morgue* (1942) both involve cleverly conceived locked-room problems, in homage to John Dickson Carr, and both are solved by mystery fiction's first nun-detective, Sister Ursula. *Nine Times Nine*—which, like *Seven of Calvary*, concerns a heretical sect—centers on a prominent Los Angeles Roman Catholic family, the Harrigans, one of whose members declares, "We've got too much money to be good and too much religion to be bad. We just hover." The second Sister Ursula novel, though fondly remembered for its portrait of the science-fiction community on the eve of World War II and its transparent lampoon of the obstructive Arthur Conan Doyle heirs, proves on rereading the least effective of Boucher's detective novels. Boucher much admired G.K. Chesterton's success in combining religion and detection, but he was unable to duplicate it. (Boucher would do better in science fiction: His story "The Quest for St. Aquin" is a classic about a robot who uses his reasoning powers to prove the existence of God.)

For all their lack of trailblazing, Boucher's detective novels make rewarding reading. His characters are not deep or vivid or memorable, but they are agreeable, intelligent, and articulate, and act in recognizably human ways. Their relations and the everyday things they talk about give Boucher's novels a surprising freshness and immediacy. The literate dialogue shows that Boucher could match Michael Innes, Dorothy L. Sayers, and S.S. Van Dine for erudition, but it is so lightly worn it never seems pretentious. Setting the stories firmly in period, rich in topical references, paradoxi-

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cally makes them seem less dated than the work of some contemporaries who strove for timelessness. The romances come naturally to Boucher; the fight scenes and blows to the jaw, thankfully brief, seem more a nod to convention. (Boucher also toed the mystery novelist's party line on unconsciousness-inducing knocks on the head: not serious, quickly recovered from.)

His puzzles are ingeniously constructed and carefully executed enough that, among the classic American writers active in the 1930s, he ranks behind only Queen, Carr, and Helen McCloy, and ahead of such contemporaries as Clayton Rawson, August Derleth, Anthony Abbot, C. Daly King, Clyde B. Clason, Stuart Palmer, and (in every way but historical significance) Van Dine. (Rex Stout and Erle Stanley Gardner stand apart from this group, because the elaborate mystery puzzle was not always central to their work.)

Boucher never completely gave up writing fiction, producing many fantasy and science-fiction stories through the 1940s, as well as a series of armchair-detective puzzles for alcoholic ex-cop Nick Noble and a few short stories about Sister Ursula, but in his later years, even his short-story production would be curtailed in favor of critical and editorial duties.

Why did Boucher the detective novelist close up shop? The most important reason was surely economic. For his whole adult life, he was a freelance writer, reviewer, and editor, a family man with no mundane day job to fall back on. His constantly precarious health demanded he husband his energies. (The process his two sons had to go through to get him up in the morning and from his afternoon nap, as described by Nevins, sounds harrowing.) In the 1940s, hardcover mystery novels were much more prestigious than lucrative, on average bringing their authors "no more than five hundred dollars" according to Marie F. Rodell's 1943 manual *Mystery Fiction: Theory and Technique*. There was big money in slick-magazine serialization, but Boucher never cracked that market. Short stories had at least a chance of selling to the slicks; radio scripts conferred higher pay; review columns and magazine editing brought a steadier income.

What would Boucher have achieved had he continued writing mystery novels? As he had from the beginning, he would have followed the Ellery Queen example: increasingly ambitious exploration of character, theme, and

milieu without deserting the puzzle element that gives the field its uniqueness. One reason he encouraged and sometimes almost managed Ross Macdonald's career must be that Macdonald took pains to create a fair-play plot, thus completing the merger of hard-boiled and traditional detective fiction.

There are two keys to understanding Boucher's loyalty to classical detection. First, he had an affinity for pursuits with strongly established rules and conventions: sports, games, opera, risqué limericks, languages, science, and religion. Second, he loved fantasy. The influential magazine Boucher and J. Francis McComas founded in 1949 would eventually be called (as it still is) *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. But it began life as *The Magazine of Fantasy*.

When they first conceived the project, they proposed to Frederic Dannay that it be called *Ellery Queen's Fantasy Magazine*. Dannay demurred, understandably contending that the public would be confused or misled to see the Queen name attached to another genre.

But (apart from the commercial hook) Boucher saw that classical detective fiction is really a branch of fantasy, outwardly realistic but in many ways as far from reality as Tolkien's Middle-Earth. Detective stories are set in an alternate universe—one in which the language, cultural and historical references, everyday motives and drives are the same as in ours, but in which murders come with a well-balanced group of suspects to choose from and are solved by sleuths from clues available to everyone but correctly interpreted only by them.

By all accounts, Boucher was a convivial man. For most of his life, he attended science-fiction fan conventions and regretted that no comparable events existed in the mystery field. In 1970, a group of fans remedied that lack with the first "Anthony Boucher Memorial Mystery Convention," or "Bouchercon." It has existed as an annual event ever since—this year's will be held next week in Austin, Texas.

At one of the early Bouchercons, editor Larry T. Shaw offered an interesting theory on why the kind-hearted Boucher quit writing detective stories, one that also suggests why he might never have been as successful at fiction as at criticism: He was too fond of his characters to keep putting them through the traumas and miseries crime fiction demands. ♦

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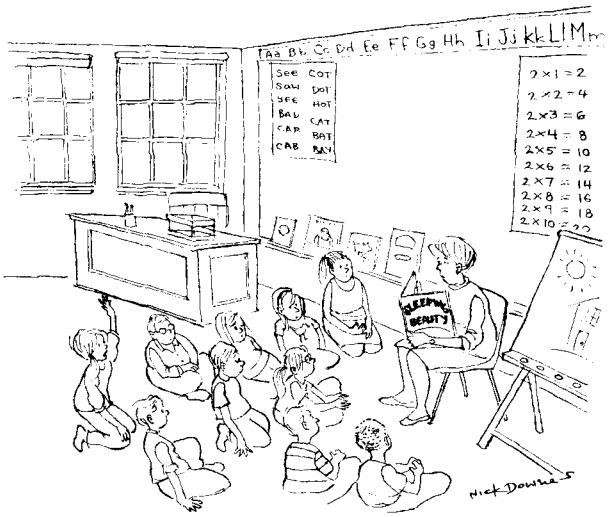

"What's the subtext?"

Books in Brief

***Lullaby* by Chuck Palahniuk (Doubleday, 260 pp., $24.95).** In Palahniuk's stories, there usually seem to be two kinds of people: suckers who believe in widely accepted moral codes, and anti-social rebels asserting their own idiosyncratic philosophies. His latest effort is therefore a pleasant surprise, his first novel not to leave one wondering whether there's any Pepto-Bismol in the house.

In *Lullaby*, the author of *Fight Club* and *Choke* has constructed a horror tale—on the foundation of a wish-fantasy that the spoken word regains the power it has lost ever since it came under siege from mass media. The narrator repeatedly complains about our noisy, talky culture, of constantly blaring radios and television sets: "Anymore, no one's mind is their own. You can't concentrate. You can't think. There's always some noise worming in. Singers shouting. Dead people laughing. Actors crying. All these little doses of emotion. Someone's always spraying the air with their mood."

The basic story involves Carl Streator, an ethically challenged journalist investigating Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, who discovers the cause for a string of crib deaths. In the nurseries of several SIDS victims, he finds a copy of a book called *Poems and Rhymes from Around the World*, each one opened to the same song. It's a lullaby that instantly kills whoever hears it. "In some ancient cultures," Streator explains, "they sang it to children during famines or droughts, anytime the tribe had outgrown its land."

Rather quickly the temptation to kill proves irresistable for Streator. He struggles to control himself, and even sets out to destroy all existing copies of the book, but he soons finds himself in moral territory more familiar to Palahniuk's earlier heroes. Yet, what sets him apart from those happier nihilists is his desire to return to conventional morality. Despite its playful slaying, *Lullaby* marks a striking departure from the assaultive gloom and bodily preoccupations of *Fight Club* and *Choke* and thus offers those not familiar with Palahniuk a less punishing taste of his often-rewarding work.

—David Skinner

***With a Happy Eye But...: America and the World, 1997-2002* by George F. Will (Free Press, 367 pp., $27).** Writing a newspaper column means following a formula—you just can't write that frequently without one. Some columnists focus on shoe-leather reporting (Robert Novak, William Safire), others on particular areas of interest (Robert Samuelson on economics, Thomas Friedman on foreign affairs), while others indulge in more glittering or unctuous prose (Maureen Dowd, Anna Quindlen). George Will has become the most consequential columnist of his generation by following his own formula. He combines erudition with logic and wit, and a loving use of the English language with a talent for applying history and philosophy to the everyday glories and absurdities of America. Two decades ago, Will wrote that column-writing "is not hard for someone blessed with a Tory temperament and sentenced to live in this stimulating era."

The columns, speeches, and book reviews collected in *With a Happy Eye But...* offer proof of something a past reviewer noted about George Will: He actually improves when he is angry—when his skill as a polemicist is fortified by a gut-level intensity. Notable in this respect are his withering pieces on partial-birth abortion and infanticide, his sparkling commentaries on the "Lewinsky Parenthesis" in America's political conversation, and an entire chapter's worth of columns demolishing campaign finance reform.

And yet, Will's conservatism is permeated by his understanding that politics, while essential, is not the most important thing in life. Reading Will in large doses offers a reminder that conservatism can be vigorous without succumbing to sophomoric ranting.

To use a metaphor from Will's beloved pastime of baseball: When presented with a fat pitch over the plate, some of today's more notorious scribes seem to prefer ignoring the pitch in favor of sprinting to the mound to bludgeon the pitcher. Perhaps they should crack open this book to see how a veteran craftsman raps pitch after pitch into the bleachers.

—Lee Bockhorn

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"The New Jersey Supreme Court allows Frank Lautenberg's name to appear on the Senate ballot, ignoring the official filing deadline."
— News item

Parody

State of New Jersey
"The Deadlines Don't Matter State"
Official State Calendar
2003

January 1: New Year's Day.

January 10: Optional New Year's Day for those who didn't like how the year started the first time.

January 14: Deadline for filing papers for April gubernatorial primary.

January 21: Summer Solstice observed.

February 1: Deadline for filing papers for April gubernatorial primary for those who missed the first deadline.

March 15: First day of Supreme Court Lotto. Holders of winning tickets get to sit on New Jersey Supreme Court.

March 31: State Flower Day. Residents' opportunity to purchase last minute Valentine's Day presents.

April 1: Start of Turnpike Appreciation Month.

April 15: Tax Filing Day (for areas of U.S. outside of New Jersey).

April 30: Rest Stop Carnival. Climax of Turnpike Appreciation Month. State's most beautiful women flash belly folds in exchange for beads.

June 2: Beginning of "Can I Have An Extension?" week at state high schools and universities. Students permitted to retake tests if things don't seem to be going well.

July 16: Statewide Food Poisoning Day (after Supreme Court permits grocery stores to ignore sell-by dates).

July 28: July 4th celebrated.

August 11: Election Day. April gubernatorial primary held. Also absolute last filing deadline for those who want to get on ballot.

September 1: Frank Lautenberg Day (formerly known as Robert Torricelli Day).

September 15: Taxes due for those who feel like filing.

November 9: Last day to revise last year's New Year's Resolutions.

December 1: Christmas observed for those who want presents early.

the weekly Standard
October 14, 2002

Illustration by Earl Keleny

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What about Iran?

Michael McFaul is the Peter and Helen Bing Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution and an associate professor of political science at Stanford University.

President Bush has outlined a strategy for dealing with Iraq but not with Iran. Although the goal may be the same—democratic regime change—the options being discussed for Iraq do not apply to Iran. Because the fate of the two countries are intertwined, it is imperative that President Bush explicitly make the distinction and articulate his policy toward Iran before proceeding with his plans for Iraq.

The Bush administration must stop treating Iran as a unitary actor and instead recognize and support the allies of liberty there, while seeking to contain the capabilities and ambitious plans of their enemies.

The promotion of liberty in Iran requires a new engagement with democrats within the country, in both the state and the society. Iranian president Khatami is not, as some insist, the Gorbachev of the anti-Islamic revolution because he does not control the guns. Nor has a Yeltsin-like figure (i.e., someone determined to destroy the ancient regime rather than reform it) emerged in Iran. Still, the parallels between the late Soviet period and the current situation in Iran are striking. Those in Iran who do control the guns (and the courts, economy, and media) are the same corrupt dinosaurs who are trying to keep afloat a revolutionary regime that has lost its spark and repress a society eager for change.

This analogy suggests a similar strategy for American foreign policy—sustained praise for and encouragement of reformers within the state and quiet support, including material support, for societal actors seeking to change the system altogether. Senior U.S. officials should meet directly with Khatami. In parallel, the Bush administration should launch an active engagement strategy with Iranian society, including more broadcasting time for Radio Free Europe targeted at Iran, more exchanges between scholars, business people, and think tanks, and more educational opportunities for Iranian students in the United States.

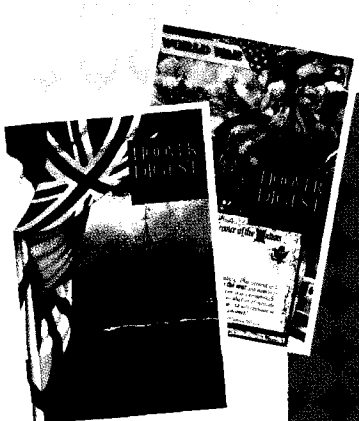
In engaging the democratic side of state and society within Iran, the Bush administration also must do more to contain the antidemocratic forces. Most important, President Bush must call on his friend in Moscow, Russian president Vladimir Putin, to stop selling Iran nuclear technologies. The Bush administration should also insist on an international weapons inspections regime in Iran.

Finally, Bush should state clearly that the United States will not invade Iran. **The current ambiguity about American plans for Iran strengthens hard-liners and weakens the prodemocratic movement because no one wants to appear unpatriotic.** Bush should also state his preference for maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq and Iran so that Iranian militants do not delude themselves into thinking they could seize part of a weakened Iraq and so that Azeris within Iran do not aspire to independence in a democratic Iran.

The demise of the last radical fundamentalist regime in the Islamic world would represent a great defeat for those such as Osama bin Laden who aspire to create such regimes. A democratic and Islamic Iran would be a powerful positive model for the region.

— Michael McFaul

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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